Analabu
Susie
Tally-Pow
Mingin

From: my Mother

Xmas 1923.

Alexander H. Bass

"Salem went east by the Cape of Good Hope and worked around to the limits of the East Indies."

"Boston vessels chose the Horn and the old route of Drake to northwestern America, and then to Hawaii and Canton.

# THE OLD CLIPPER DAYS

JULIAN S. CUTLER

The old Clipper days were jolly, when we sailed the Seven Seas,
And the house-flags of our merchant ships were whipped by every breeze;
It was good-by to your mother and the pretty girls on shore,
For we're off around the howling Horn, bound down to Singapore.

We romped the rushing trade-winds, and we raced the big monsoon;
We carried reeling royals from Manila to Rangoon;
We were chased by Malay pirates from Natura to Penang,
And we drove her scuppers under to outsail the cut-throat gang.

We went rolling in "The Doldrums" till the tar oozed from our seams;
We went pushing through the ice-pack till the pressure cracked our beams;
And old Mother Carey's chickens wheeled around us o'er the brine,
While we entertained Old Neptune when he hailed up on the line.

Those were days to be remembered, when our good ship sailed away,
From the old home port behind us, to Calcutta or Bombay;
When we sold the Heathen nations rum and opium in rolls,
And the Missionaries went along to save their sinful souls.

It was "Bundle out, my bullies, and we'll give the sheets a pull";
It was "Ease her off a little, till the topsails stand rap full";
It was "Scrub the decks, my Jackies, and we'll take the sun at noon";
It was "Sou'-sou'-west-half-south, my boy, beneath the Southern moon."

We raced across to Africa with "dicker" in the hold;
We traded beads and calico for ivory and gold;
We raised the Northern Dipper as we sunk the Southern Cross,
And when we figured up the run, the owners felt no loss.

Then 'twas "Home again, my bullies," with our bows knee-deep in foam,
To the mother that was waiting and the happy ones at home;
It was home from old Calcutta or Hong Kong or far Bombay,
To the land we loved to think of when our hearts were far away.

# THE SHIPS AND SAILORS OF OLD SALEM

The *Panay*, one of the last of the Salem fleet bound out from Boston to Manila twenty-five years ago

# THE SHIPS AND SAILORS

OF

# OLD SALEM

*THE RECORD OF A BRILLIANT ERA OF AMERICAN ACHIEVEMENT*

BY

RALPH D. PAINE

*Author of*
*"Roads of Adventure"*
*"Lost Ships and Lonely Seas"*
*etc.*

*REVISED WITH A NEW PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR AND WITH A NEW AND COMPLETE INDEX*

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## "THE MERCHANTMEN"

"Beyond all outer charting
We sailed where none have sailed,
And saw the land-lights burning
On islands none have hailed;
Our hair stood up for wonder,
But when the night was done,
There danced the deep to windward
Blue-empty 'neath the sun."

RUDYARD KIPLING.

"We're outward bound this very day,
Good-bye, fare you well,
Good-bye, fare you well.
We're outward bound this very day,
Hurrah, my boys, we're outward bound."

(*From a chantey sung while sheeting home topsails.*)

# AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THIS book describes the deeds of a race of red-blooded Americans who won honor for their flag and renown for their nation during the era of its struggle for very existence. From log books, sea journals, and other manuscripts hitherto unpublished (most of them written during the years between the Revolution and the War of 1812), are herein gathered such narratives as those of the first American voyages to Japan, India, the Philippines, Guam, the Cape of Good Hope, Sumatra, Arabia, and the South Seas. These records, as penned by the seamen who made Salem the most famous port of the New World a century ago, are much more than local annals. They comprise a unique and brilliant chapter of American history, and they speak for themselves.

This vanished era, this closed chapter of American achievement, which reached its zenith a full century ago, belongs not alone to Salem but also to the nation. The seamen of this old port were traders, it is true, but they lent to commerce an epic quality, and because they steered so many brave ships to ports where no other American topsails had ever gleamed, they deserve to be remembered among those pioneers whose work left its imprints far beyond the town or coast they called home.

If the records of maritime Salem hold any lessons for to-day, if they are worth while as something more than stirring tales of bygone generations, it is because those indom-

itable seafarers achieved success without counting the odds. They were enormously hampered by the policies of Great Britain which deliberately endeavored to crush Colonial shipping by means of various tonnage, customs, and neutrality regulations. It was a merciless jealousy that sought pretexts to confiscate every Yankee merchantman and ruin her owners.

There were the continual risks of the sea, of uncharted, unlighted coasts and reefs and islands, and a plague of ferocious pirates and lawless privateers who haunted the trade routes from the New England coast to the Spanish Main and even to far distant Madagascar. The vessel lucky enough to escape all these perils might run afoul of a final menace in the cruiser or customs officer of the King. Literally hundreds of American merchantmen were seized in their own harbors and carried off before the eyes of their owners who could only stand by in speechless rage and sorrow at the loss of their labor and investment.

In spite of these manifold handicaps, American ships and sailors prospered and multiplied, by virtue of their audacity and intelligence, nor did they waste breath in complaining that they could not compete with the more favored merchant navies of England and the Continent. They took and held their commanding share of the world's trade because they had to have it. They wanted it earnestly enough to go out and get it.

Of late there is a revival of interest in the tales of the pirates and buccaneers of the blue Caribbean, tales artfully colored with the hues of romance. Those hardy seafarers of Salem would have laughed and spat derisively to leeward at the notion of finding romance in the scurvy rogues who harried their trading voyages and were a routine hazard of

the day's work. Every merchant vessel carried a battery of cannon behind her stout bulwarks, and her seamen were trained to handle them. The racks of cutlasses and boarding pikes, the stands of muskets, were for use and not for show.

Within sight of Boston harbor, they might encounter the notorious Edward Low cruising with his pirate squadron, or the bold John Quelch of Marblehead who, at last, stretched hemp with five of his crew and inspired a Salem poet to write:

> "Ye pirates who against God's laws did fight,
> Have all been taken which is very right.
> Some of them were old and others young,
> And on the flats of Boston they were hung."

Off the southern coast, the dreaded Blackbeard was raking the horizon with his brass spy-glass to snap up tempting prizes and give their hapless people no quarter. Captain Ned England was taking his pick of the colonial merchantmen which were earning a respectable livelihood in the slave trade of the Guinea coast. And in the waters of the Spanish Main roved the bloodthirsty Captain Bartholomew Roberts whose favorite toast was "Damnation to the man that lives to wear a halter."

The old sea chronicles of Salem are filled with episodes of these misfortunes, encounters, battles, escapes, until the marvel grows that the mariners of those quaint ketches, brigs, schooners, and snows could have been persuaded to set out from port at all. It is easy to comprehend why their bills of lading included this petition, "And so God send the good ship to her desired port in safety. Amen."

It might have been as near home as Vineyard Sound, with the pirate Thomas Pounds strutting his quarter deck under his red flag and flourishing a naked sword crying:—"Come

on board, ye doggs," to the brave merchant skipper, Captain Pease of the sloop *Mary*, who accepted the challenge and was slain in the engagement. Or it might have been the *Friendship* of Salem loading pepper on the wild Sumatra coast when the Malay pirates took her, and Captain Charles Endicott proceeded to recapture her.

Such was the schooling of the Yankee seafarers who manned the privateers and frigates that flew the stars and stripes in the two wars with England. At the beginning of the Revolution there was no American navy. Even later in the war, when a few small Continental cruisers flew the ensign of the new republic, this feeble force was but a jest when matched against the fleets of frigates and three-deckers whose flaming broadsides had made the name of England glorious afloat. But the New England ports, and Salem most conspicuously, had bred a race of superb seamen and skilled shipbuilders. Swiftly, eagerly, they turned to privateering as a weapon to harass and injure the foe.

History has somehow overlooked the part they played in winning the war of the Revolution. The fact is that these private armed ships dealt British maritime prestige the deadliest, most humiliating blows it had ever suffered.

The seafaring men and boys of Salem had never known peace or safety on blue water. It was a simple matter to sling more guns aboard and recruit additional men at the tavern rendezvous. One after another the Salem privateers rushed to sea like hawks. No meek submission could be expected of British tars if their ships carried metal enough. It was a game of rare seamanship, of hard fighting and stern chases, of the hope of rich booty in prizes taken. And in the following pages you may read of the finest sea fighter of his time, barring Paul Jones. This was Captain Jona-

than Haraden, a Salem privateersman, who captured a thousand British cannon on the high seas.

The World War showed that the seafaring temper of our young men had not rusted from long disuse. Columbia returned to the ocean to man great fleets of destroyers, battleships, and transports. It was a huge task brilliantly, successfully executed, with a native aptitude for salt water that still survives. Then came the call of the vast new merchant marine built to serve the emergencies of war. Many thousands of fine youngsters elected to follow the sea as a career.

As a nation, however, it may be said that the United States has again turned its back to the sea. All efforts to revive the old maritime spirit have languished. The nation's destiny has veered from its coasts, and its energies seek other outlets.

True it is, therefore, that the chronicles of its past greatness afloat should be cherished as a precious asset and a most illustrious heritage. None of its builders played a larger, more thrilling part that did these merchant explorers and fighting seamen of old Salem who sailed where no other ships had dared to go.

R. D. P.

Durham, N. H., 1923.

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# THE SHIPS AND SAILORS OF OLD SALEM

# The Ships and Sailors of Old Salem

## CHAPTER I

### A PORT OF VANISHED FLEETS

AMERICAN ships and sailors have almost vanished from the seas that lie beyond their own coasts. The twentieth century has forgotten the era when Yankee topsails, like flying clouds, flecked every ocean, when tall spars forested every Atlantic port from Portland to Charleston, and when the American spirit of adventurous enterprise and rivalry was in its finest flower on the decks of our merchant squadrons. The last great chapter of the nation's life on blue water was written in the days of the matchless clippers which swept round the Horn to San Francisco or fled homeward from the Orient in the van of the tea fleets.

The Cape Horn clipper was able to survive the coming of the Age of Steam a few years longer than the Atlantic packet ships, such as the *Dreadnought*, but her glory departed with the Civil War and thereafter the story of the American merchant marine is one of swift and sorrowful decay. The boys of the Atlantic coast, whose fathers had followed the sea in legions, turned inland to find their careers, and the sterling qualities which had been bred in the bone by generations of salty ancestry now helped to conquer the western wilderness.

It is all in the past, this noble and thrilling history of American achievement on the deep sea, and a country with thousands of miles of seacoast has turned its back toward the spray-swept scenes of its ancient greatness to seek the fulfillment of its destiny in peopling the prairie, reclaiming the desert and feeding its mills and factories with the resources of forest, mine and farm.

For more than two centuries, however, we Americans were a maritime race, in peace and war, and the most significant deeds and spectacular triumphs of our seafaring annals were wrought long before the era of the clipper ship. The fastest and most beautiful fabric ever driven by the winds, the sky-sail clipper was handled with a superb quality of seamanship which made the mariners of other nations doff their caps to the ruddy Yankee masters of the *Sovereign of the Seas*, the *Flying Cloud*, the *Comet*, the *Westward Ho*, or the *Swordfish*. Her routes were well traveled, however, and her voyages hardly more eventful than those of the liner of to-day. Islands were charted, headlands lighted, and the instruments and science of navigation so far perfected as to make ocean pathfinding no longer a matter of blind reckoning and guesswork. Pirates and privateers had ceased to harry the merchantmen and to make every voyage a hazard of life and death from the Bahama Banks to the South Seas.

Through the vista of fifty years the Yankee clipper has a glamour of singularly picturesque romance, but it is often forgotten that two hundred years of battling against desperate odds and seven generations of seafaring stock had been required to evolve her type and to breed the men who sailed her in the nineteenth century. It is to this much older race of American seamen and the stout ships they built and manned that we of to-day should be grateful for many of the finest pages in the history of our country's progress. The most adventurous age

of our merchant mariners had reached its climax at the time of the War of 1812, and its glory was waning almost a hundred years ago. For the most part its records are buried in sea-stained log books and in the annals and traditions of certain ancient New England coastwise towns,* of which Salem was the most illustrious.

This port of Salem is chiefly known beyond New England as the scene of a wicked witchcraft delusion which caused the death of a score of poor innocents in 1692, and in later days as the birthplace of Nathaniel Hawthorne. It is not so commonly known that this old town of Salem, nestled in a bight of the Massachusetts coast, was once the most important seat of maritime enterprise in the New World. Nor when its population of a century ago is taken into consideration can any foreign port surpass for adventure, romance and daring the history of Salem during the era of its astonishing activity. Even as recently as 1854, when the fleets of Salem were fast dwindling, the *London Daily News*, in a belated eulogy of our American ships and sailors, was moved to compare the spirit of this port with that of Venice and the old Hanse towns and to say: "We owe a cordial admiration of the spirit of American commerce in its adventurous aspects. To watch it is to witness some of the finest romance of our time."

* In 1810 Newburyport merchants owned forty-one ships, forty-nine brigs and fifty schooners, and was the seat of extensive commerce with the East Indies and other ports of the Orient. Twenty-one deep-water sailing ships for foreign trade were built on the Merrimac River in that one year. The fame of Newburyport as a shipbuilding and shipowning port was carried far into the last century and culminated in the building of the Atlantic packet *Dreadnought*, the fastest and most celebrated sailing ship that ever flew the American flag. She made a passage from New York to Queenstown in nine days and thirteen hours in 1860. Her famous commander, the late Captain Samuel Samuels, wrote of the *Dreadnought:*

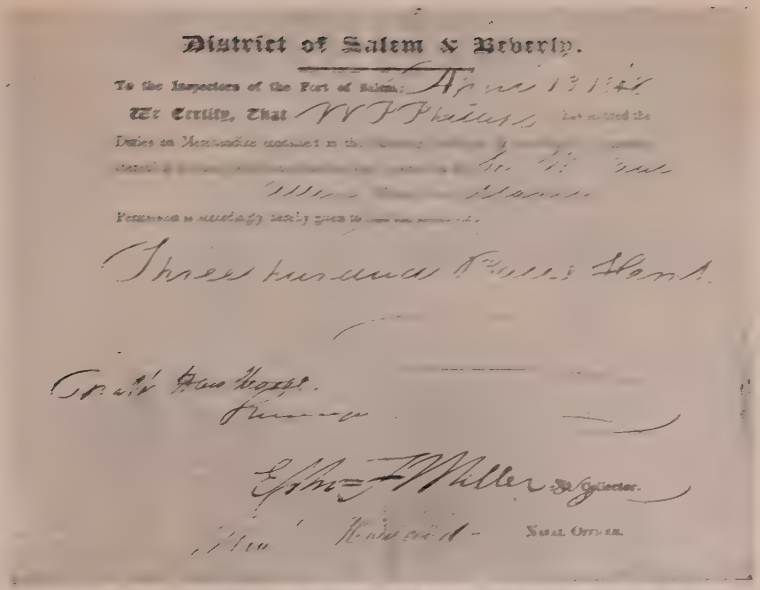
"She was never passed in anything over a four-knot breeze. She was what might be termed a semi-clipper and possessed the merit of being able to bear driving as long as her sails and spars would stand. By the sailors she was called the 'Wild Boat of the Atlantic,' while others called her 'The Flying Dutchman.'"

Nathaniel Hawthorne was Surveyor in the Custom House of Salem in 1848–49, after the prestige of the port had been well-nigh lost. He was descended from a race of Salem shipmasters and he saw daily in the streets of his native town the survivors of the generations of incomparable seamen who had first carried the American flag to Hindoostan, Java, Sumatra, and Japan, who were first to trade with the Fiji Islands and with Madagascar, who had led the way to the west coast of Africa and to St. Petersburg, who had been pioneers in opening the commerce of South America and China to Yankee ships. They had "sailed where no other ships dared to go, they had anchored where no one else dreamed of looking for trade." They had fought pirates and the privateers of a dozen races around the world, stamping themselves as the Drakes and the Raleighs and Gilberts of American commercial daring.

In the Salem of his time, however, Hawthorne perceived little more than a melancholy process of decay, and a dusky background for romances of a century more remote. It would seem as if he found no compelling charm in the thickly clustered memories that linked the port with its former greatness on the sea. Some of the old shipmasters were in the Custom House service with him and he wrote of them as derelicts "who after being tost on every sea and standing sturdily against life's tempestuous blast had finally drifted into this quiet nook where with little to disturb them except the periodical terrors of a Presidential election, they one and all acquired a new lease of life."

They were simple, brave, elemental men, hiding no tortuous problems of conscience, very easy to analyze and catalogue, and perhaps not apt, for this reason, to make a strong appeal to the genius of the author of "The Scarlet Letter."

"They spent a good deal of time asleep in their accustomed corners," he also wrote of them, "with their chairs tilted back against the wall; awaking, however, once or twice in a forenoon



**District of Salem & Beverly.**

To the Inspectors of the Port of Salem: April 13 1848

We Certify, That W W P Phillips has entered the Duties on Merchandise contained in the [illegible]

[illegible]

Permission is accordingly hereby given to [illegible]

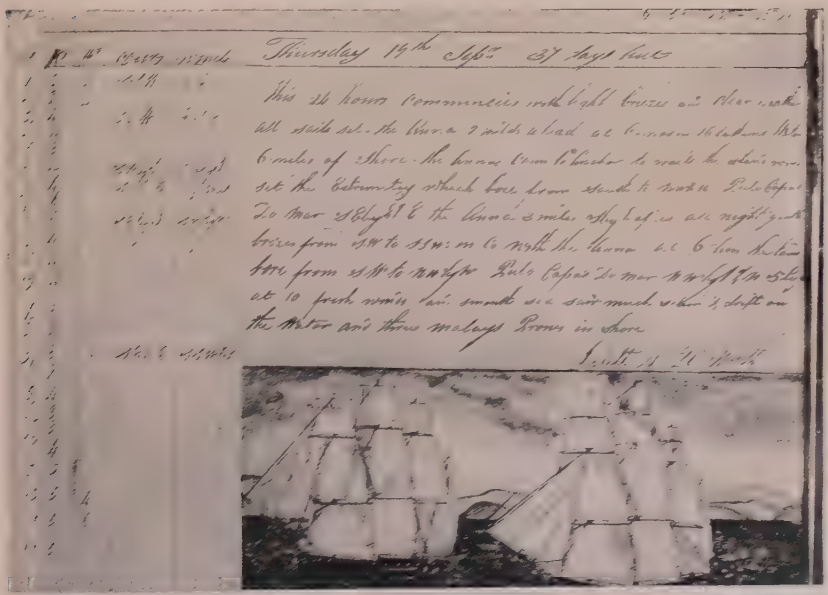
Three hundred Dollars Sent.

[illegible]

Ephr F Miller Collector.

[illegible] Naval Officer.

Custom House document with signature of Nathaniel Hawthorne as surveyor



Thursday 19th Sept. 37 Lays hut

This 24 hours commencies with light breezes and clear weather all sails set the Anna 2 miles ahead at 6 [illegible] 16 [illegible] 6 miles of shore the Anna [illegible] to wait the [illegible] set the Extremity which bore from South to [illegible] Pulo Capas Do Mar S Eby E the Anna 3 miles [illegible] all night [illegible] breezes from SW to SSW: on Co with the Anna at 6 [illegible] bore from SW to [illegible] Pulo Capas Do mar [illegible] at 10 fresh winds and smooth sea saw much [illegible] drift on the Water and three malays Prows in shore

[illegible]

Page from the illustrated log of the *Eolus*. Her captain drew such pictures as these of the ships he sighted at sea

to bore one another with the several thousandth repetition of old sea stories and mouldy jokes that had grown to be passwords and counter-signs among them."

One of the sea journals or logs of Captain Nathaniel Hathorne,* father of the author, possesses a literary interest in that its title page was lettered by the son when a lad of sixteen. With many an ornamental flourish the inscription runs:

Nathaniel Hathorne's
Book—1820—Salem.
A Journal of a Passage from Bengall to America
In the Ship *America* of
Salem, 1798.

This is almost the only volume of salty flavored narrative to which Nathaniel Hawthorne may be said to have contributed, although he was moved to pay this tribute to his stout-hearted forebears:

"From father to son, for above a hundred years, they followed the sea; a gray-headed shipmaster in each generation retiring from the quarter-deck to the homestead, while a boy of fourteen took the hereditary place before the mast, confronting the salt spray and the gale which had blustered against his sire and grandsire."

Even to-day there survive old shipmasters and merchants of Salem who in their own boyhood heard from the lips of the actors their stories of shipwrecks on uncharted coasts; of captivity among the Algerians and in the prisons of France, Eng-

*Nathaniel Hawthorne, the author, chose to insert a "w" in the family name of *Hathorne* borne by his father.

"The four years had lapsed quietly and quickly by, and Hawthorne, who now adopted the fanciful spelling of his name after his personal whim, was man grown." (Nathaniel Hawthorne, by George E. Woodberry, in American Men of Letters Series.)

land and Spain; of hairbreadth escapes from pirates on the Spanish Main and along Sumatran shores; of ship's companies overwhelmed by South Sea cannibals when Salem barks were pioneers in the wake of Captain Cook; of deadly actions fought alongside British men-of-war and private armed ships, and of steering across far-distant seas when "India was a new region and only Salem knew the way thither."

Such men as these were trained in a stern school to fight for their own. When the time came they were also ready to fight for their country. Salem sent to sea one hundred and fifty-eight privateers during the Revolution. They carried two thousand guns and were manned by more than six thousand men, a force equal in numbers to the population of the town. These vessels captured four hundred and forty-four prizes, or more than one-half the total number taken by all the Colonies during the war.

In the War of 1812 Salem manned and equipped forty privateers and her people paid for and built the frigate *Essex* which under the command of David Porter swept the Pacific clean of British commerce and met a glorious end in her battle with the *Phœbe* and *Cherub* off the harbor of Valparaiso. Nor among the sea fights of both wars are there to be found more thrilling ship actions than were fought by Salem privateersmen who were as ready to exchange broadsides or measure boarding pikes with a "king's ship" as to snap up a tempting merchantman.

But even beyond these fighting merchant sailors lay a previous century of such stress and hazard in ocean traffic as this age cannot imagine. One generation after another of honest shipmasters had been the prey of a great company of lawless rovers under many flags or no flag at all. The distinction between privateers and pirates was not clearly drawn in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the tiny American

brigs and sloops which bravely fared to the West Indies and Europe were fair marks for the polyglot freebooters that laughed at England's feeble protection of her colonial trade.

The story of the struggles and heroisms of the western pioneers has been told over and over again. Every American schoolboy is acquainted with the story of the beginnings of the New England Colonies and of their union. But the work of the seafaring breed of Americans has been somewhat suffered to remain in the background. Their astonishing adventures were all in the day's work and were commonplace matters to their actors. The material for the plot of a modern novel of adventure may be found condensed into a three-line entry of many an ancient log-book.

High on the front of a massive stone building in Essex Street, Salem, is chiseled the inscription, "East India Marine Hall." Beneath this are the obsolete legends, "Asiatic Bank," and "Oriental Insurance Office." Built by the East India Marine Society eighty-four years ago, this structure is now the home of the Peabody Museum and a storehouse for the unique collections which Salem seafarers brought home from strange lands when their ships traded in every ocean. The East India Marine Society still exists. The handful of surviving members meet now and then and spin yarns of the vanished days when they were masters of stately square-riggers in the deep-water trade. All of them are gray and some of them quite feeble and every little while another of this company slips his cable for the last long voyage.

The sight-seeing visitor in Salem is fascinated by its quaint and picturesque streets, recalling as they do no fewer than three centuries of American life, and by its noble mansions set beneath the elms in an atmosphere of immemorial traditions. But the visitor is not likely to seek the story of Salem as it is written in the records left by the men who made it great. For

those heroic seafarers not only made history but they also wrote it while they lived it. The East India Marine Society was organized in 1799 "to assist the widows and children of deceased members; to collect such facts and observations as tended to the improvement and security of navigation, and to form a museum of natural and artificial curiosities, particularly such as are to be found beyond the Cape of Good Hope or Cape Horn."*

The by-laws provided that "any person shall be eligible as a member of this society who shall have actually navigated the seas near the Cape of Good Hope or Cape Horn, either as master or commander or as factor or supercargo in any vessel belonging to Salem."

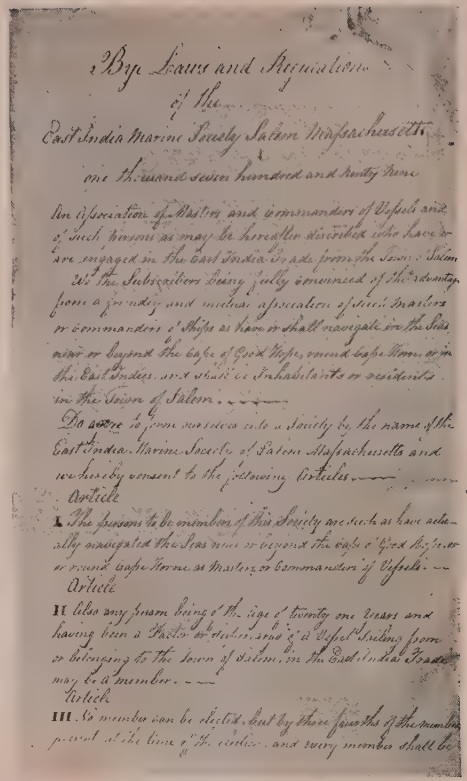
From its foundation until the time when the collections of the Society were given in charge of the Peabody Academy of Science in 1867, three hundred and fifty masters and supercargoes of Salem had qualified for membership as having sailed beyond Cape Horn or the Cape of Good Hope.

More than a century ago, therefore, these mariners of Salem began to write detailed journals of their voyages, to be deposited with this Society in order that their fellow shipmasters might glean from them such facts as might "tend to the improvement and security of navigation." Few seas were charted, and Salem ships were venturing along unknown shores. The

* (1799) "Oct. 22. It is proposed by the new marine society, called the East India Marine Society, to make a cabinet. This society has been lately thought of. Captain Gibant first mentioned the plan to me this summer and desired me to give him some plan of articles or a sketch. The first friends of the institution met and chose a committee to compare and digest articles from the sketches given to them. Last week was informed that in the preceding week the members met and signed the articles chosen by the committee.

"Nov. 7. Captain Carnes has presented his curiosities to the new-formed East India Marine Society and they are providing a museum and cabinet. . . . Rooms were obtained for their meetings and a place for the deposit of books, charts, etc., and in July of the following year glass cases were provided to arrange therein the specimens that had been accumulated." (Diary of Rev. William Bentley.)

The East India Marine Society's hall, now the home of the Peabody Museum



Bye Laws and Regulations
of the
East India Marine Society Salem Massachusetts
one thousand seven hundred and ninety nine

An Association of Masters and Commanders of Vessels and of such persons as may be hereafter described who have or are engaged in the East India trade from the Town of Salem

We the Subscribers being fully convinced of the advantage from a friendly and mutual association of such Masters or Commanders of Ships as have or shall navigate the Seas over or beyond the Cape of Good Hope round Cape Horn or in the East Indies and shall be Inhabitants or residents in the Town of Salem

Do agree to form ourselves into a Society by the name of the East India Marine Society of Salem Massachusetts and we hereby consent to the following Articles

Article

I The persons to be members of this Society are such as have actually navigated the Seas over or beyond the Cape of Good Hope or round Cape Horn as Masters or Commanders of Vessels

Article

II Also any person being of the age of twenty one years and having been a Master or Owner or a Part Owner sailing from or belonging to the Town of Salem in the East India Trade may be a member

Article

III No member can be elected but by three fourths of the members present at the time of the election and every member shall be

Page from the records of the East India Marine Society, written in 1799

journal of one of these pioneer voyages was a valuable aid to the next shipmaster who went that way. These journals were often expanded from the ship's logs, and written after the captains came home. The habit of carefully noting all incidents of trade, discovery, and dealings with primitive races taught these seamen to make their logs something more than routine accounts of wind and weather. Thus, year after year and generation after generation, there was accumulating a library of adventurous first-hand narrative, written in stout manuscript volumes.

It was discovered that a pen and ink drawing of the landfall of some almost unknown island would help the next captain passing that coast to identify its headlands. Therefore many of these quarter-deck chroniclers developed an astonishing aptitude for sketching coast line, mountains and bays. Some of them even made pictures in water color of the ships they saw or spoke, and their logs were illustrated descriptions of voyages to the South Seas or Mauritius or China. In this manner the tradition was cherished that a shipmaster of Salem owed it to his fellow mariners and townspeople to bring home not only all the knowledge he could gather but also every kind of curious trophy to add to the collections of the East India Marine Society. And as the commerce over seas began to diminish in the nineteenth century, this tradition laid fast hold upon many Salem men and women whose fathers had been shipmasters. They took pride in gathering together all the old log books they could find in cobwebby attics and battered seachests and in increasing this unique library of blue water.

Older than the East India Marine Society is the Salem Marine Society, which was founded in 1766 by eighteen shipmasters, and which still maintains its organization in its own building. Its Act of Incorporation, dated 1772, stated that "whereas a considerable number of persons who are or have

been Masters of ships or other vessels, have for several years past associated themselves in the town of Salem; and the principal end of said Society being to improve the knowledge of this coast, by the several members, upon their arrival from sea communicating their observations, inwards and outwards, of the variation of the needle, soundings, courses and distances, and all other remarkable things about it, in writing, to be lodged with the Society, for the making of the navigation more safe; and also to relieve one another and their families in poverty or other adverse accidents of life, which they are more particularly liable to," etc.

Most of these records, together with those belonging to the East India Marine Society and many others rescued from oblivion, have been assembled and given in care of the Essex Institute of Salem as the choicest treasure of its notable historical library. It has come to pass that a thousand of these logs and sea-journals are stored in one room of the Essex Institute, comprising many more than this number of voyages made between 1750 and 1890, a period of a century and a half, which included the most brilliant era of American sea life. Privateer, sealer, whaler, and merchantman, there they rest, row after row of canvas-covered books, filled with the day's work of as fine a race of seamen as ever sailed; from the log of the tiny schooner *Hopewell* on a voyage to the West Indies amid perils of swarming pirates and privateers a generation before the Revolution, down to the log of the white-winged *Mindoro* of the Manila fleet which squared away her yards for the last time only fifteen years ago.

There is no other collection of *Americana* which can so vividly recall a vanished epoch and make it live again as these hundreds upon hundreds of ancient log books. They are complete, final, embracing as they do the rise, the high-tide and the ebb of the commerce of Salem, the whole story of those

vikings of deep-water enterprise who dazzled the maritime world. These journals reflect in intimate and sharply focused detail that little world which Harriet Martineau discerned when she visited Salem seventy-five years ago and related:

"Salem, Mass., is a remarkable place. This 'city of peace' will be better known hereafter for it's commerce than for it's witch tragedy. It has a population of fourteen thousand and more wealth in proportion to its population than perhaps any town in the world. Its commerce is speculative but vast and successful. It is a frequent circumstance that a ship goes out without a cargo for a voyage around the world. In such a case the captain puts his elder children to school, takes his wife and younger children and starts for some semi-barbarous place where he procures some odd kind of cargo which he exchanges with advantage for another somewhere else; and so goes trafficking around the world, bringing home a freight of the highest value.

"These enterprising merchants of Salem are hoping to appropriate a large share of the whale fishery and their ships are penetrating the northern ice. They speak of Fayal and the Azores as if they were close at hand. The fruits of the Mediterranean are on every table. They have a large acquaintance at Cairo. They know Napoleon's grave at St. Helena, and have wild tales to tell of Mozambique and Madagascar, and stores of ivory to show from there. They speak of the power of the king of Muscat, and are sensible of the riches of the southeast coast of Arabia. Anybody will give you anecdotes from Canton and descriptions of the Society and Sandwich Islands. They often slip up the western coast of their two continents, bringing furs from the back regions of their own wide land, glance up at the Andes on their return; double Cape Horn, touch at the ports of Brazil and Guiana, look about them in the West Indies, feeling almost at home there,

and land some fair morning in Salem and walk home as if they had done nothing remarkable."

Within sight of this Essex Institute is the imposing building of the Peabody Academy of Science and Marine Museum, already mentioned. Here the loyal sons of Salem, aided by the generous endowment of George Peabody, the banker and philanthropist, have created a notable memorial to the sea-born genius of the old town. One hall is filled with models and paintings of the stout ships which made Salem rich and famous. These models were built and rigged with the most painstaking accuracy of detail, most of them the work of mariners of the olden time, and many of them made on shipboard during long voyages. Scores of the paintings of ships were made when they were afloat, their cannon and checkered ports telling of the dangers which merchantmen dared in those times; their hulls and rigging wearing a quaint and archaic aspect.

Beneath them are displayed the tools of the seaman's trade long ere steam made of him a paint-swabber and mechanic. Here are the ancient quadrants, "half-circles," and hand log lines, timed with sandglasses, with which our forefathers found their way around the world. Beside them repose the "colt" and the "cat-o'-nine-tails" with which those tough tars were flogged by their skippers and mates. Cutlasses such as were wielded in sea fights with Spanish, French and English, boarding axes and naval tomahawks, are flanked by carved whales-teeth, whose intricate designs of ships, cupids and mermaids whiled away the dogwatches under the Southern Cross. Over yonder is a notched limb of a sea-washed tree on which a sailor tallied the days and weeks of five months' solitary waiting on a desert island where he had been cast by shipwreck.

Portraits of famous shipping merchants and masters gaze at portraits of Sultans of Zanzibar, Indian Rajahs and hong merchants of Canton whose names were household words in

A corner in the Marine Room of the Peabody Museum, showing portraits of the ship-masters and merchants of Salem

The Marine Room, Peabody Museum, showing the ships of Salem during a period of one hundred and fifty years

the Salem of long ago. In other spacious halls of this museum are unique displays of the tools, weapons, garments and adornments of primitive races, gathered generations before their countries and islands were ransacked by the tourist and the ethnologist. They portray the native arts and habits of life before they were corrupted by European influences. Some of the tribes which fashioned these things have become extinct, but their vanquished handiwork is preserved in these collections made with devoted loyalty by the old shipmasters who were proud of their home town and of their Marine Society. From the Fiji and Gilbert and Hawaiian Islands, from Samoa, Arabia, India, China, Africa and Japan, and every other foreign shore where ships could go, these trophies were brought home to lay the foundation of collections which to-day are visited by scientists from abroad in order to study many rare objects which can be no longer obtained.*

The catalogue of ports from which the deep-laden argosies rolled home to Salem is astonishing in its scope. From 1810 to 1830, for example, Salem ships flew the American flag in these ports:

Sumatra, Malaga, Naples, Liverpool, St. Domingo, Baracoa, Cadiz, Cayenne, Gottenburg, La Guayra, Havana, Canton, Smyrna, Matanzas, Valencia, Turk's Island, Pernambuco, Rio Janeiro, Messina, St. Pierre's, Point Petre, Cronstadt, Archangel, St. Lucia, Trinidad, Surinam, St. Petersburg, Calcutta, Porto Rico, Palermo, Algeciras, Constantinople, Cumana, Kiel, Angostura, Jacquemel, Gustavia, Malta, Exuma, Buenos Ayres, Christiana, Stralsund, Guadaloupe, Nevis, Riga, Madras, St. Vincent's, Pillau, Amsterdam, Maranham, Para, Leghorn,

* A costly new hall has been recently added to the Museum to contain the Japanese and Chinese collections. This building was the gift of Dr. Charles G. Weld of Boston. Its Japanese floor contains the most complete and valuable ethnological collections, portraying the life of the Japanese people of the feudal age, that exists to-day. Japanese scientists and students have visited Salem

Manila, Samarang, Java, Mocha, South Sea Islands, Africa, Padang, Cape de Verde, Zanzibar and Madagascar.

In these days of huge ships and cavernous holds in which freight is stowed to the amount of thousands of tons, we are apt to think that those early mariners carried on their commerce over seas in a small way. But the records of old Salem contain scores of entries for the early years of the last century in which the duties paid on cargoes of pepper, sugar, indigo, and other Oriental wares swelled the custom receipts from twenty-five thousand to sixty thousand dollars. In ten years, from 1800 to 1810, when the maritime prosperity of the port was at flood-tide, the foreign entries numbered more than one thousand and the total amount of duties more than seven million dollars. And from the beginning of the nineteenth century until the ships of Salem vanished from blue water, a period of seventy years, roughly speaking, more than twenty million dollars poured into the Custom House as duties on foreign cargoes.

Old men now living remember when the old warehouses along the wharves were full of "hemp from Luzon; pepper from Sumatra; coffee from Arabia; palm oil from the west coast of Africa; cotton from Bombay; duck and iron from the Baltic; tallow from Madagascar; salt from Cadiz; wine from Portugal and the Madeiras; figs, raisins and almonds from the Mediterranean; teas and silks from China; sugar, rum and molasses from the West Indies; ivory and gum-copal from Zanzibar; rubber, hides and wool from South America; whale oil from the Arctic and Antarctic, and sperm from the South Seas."

in order to examine many objects of this unique collection which are no longer to be found in their own country. Professor Edward S. Morse, director of the Museum, and curator of the Japanese pottery section of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, has sifted and arranged these collections with singular patience, expert knowledge, and brilliantly successful results. The South Sea collections are also unequaled in many important particulars, especially in the field of weapons and ornaments from the Fiji and Marquesas Islands.

In 1812 one hundred and twenty-six Salem ships were in the deep-water trade, and of these fifty-eight were East Indiamen. Twenty years later this noble fleet numbered one hundred and eleven. They had been pioneers in opening new routes of commerce, but the vessels of the larger ports were flocking in their wake. Boston, with the development of railway transportation, New York with the opening of the Erie Canal, Philadelphia and Baltimore with their more advantageous situations for building up a commerce with the great and growing hinterland of the young United States, were creating their ocean commerce at the expense of old Salem. Bigger ships were building and deeper harbors were needed and Salem shipowners dispatched their vessels from Boston instead of the home port. Then came the Age of Steam on the sea, and the era of the sailing vessel was foredoomed.

The Custom House which looks down at crumbling Derby Wharf where the stately East Indiamen once lay three deep, awakes from its drowsy idleness to record the entries of a few lumber-laden schooners from Nova Scotia. Built in 1819, when the tide of Salem commerce had already begun to ebb, its classic and pillared bulk recalls the comment of its famous officer, Nathaniel Hawthorne: "It was intended to accommodate an hoped for increase in the commercial prosperity of the place, hopes destined never to be realized, and was built a world too large for any necessary purpose."

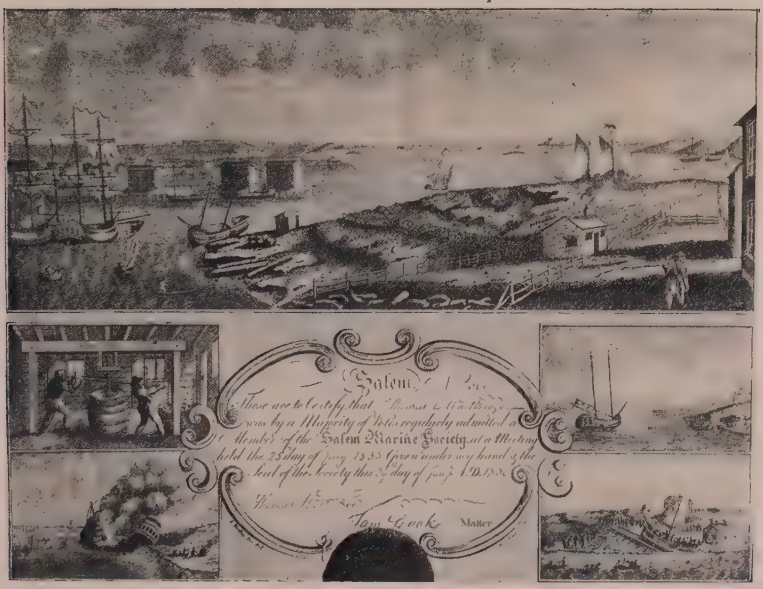
Yet in the records left by these vanished generations of seamen; in the aspect of the stately mansions built from the fortunes won by their ships; in the atmosphere of the old wharves and streets, there has been preserved, as if caught in amber, the finished story of one of the most romantic and high-hearted periods of American achievement.

Salem was a small city during her maritime career, numbering hardly more than ten thousand souls at a time when her

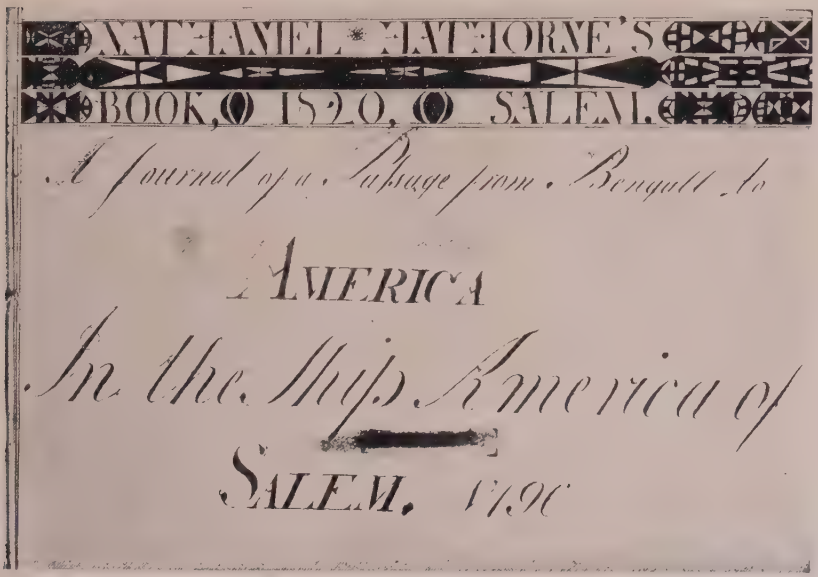
trade had made her famous in every port of the world. Her achievements were the work of an exceedingly bold and vigorous population in whom the pioneering instinct was fostered and guided by a few merchants of rare sagacity, daring and imagination. It must not be forgotten that from the early part of the seventeenth century to the latter year of the eighteenth century when this seafaring genius reached its highest development, the men of Salem had been trained and bred to wrest a livelihood from salt water. During this period of one hundred and fifty years before the Revolution the sea was the highway of the Colonists whose settlements fringed the rugged coast line of New England. At their backs lay a hostile wilderness and a great part of the population toiled at fishing, trading and shipbuilding.

Roger Conant, who, in 1626, founded the settlement later called Salem, had left his fellow Pilgrims at Plymouth because he would not agree to "separate" from the Church of England. Pushing along the coast to Nantasket, where Captain Miles Standish had built an outpost, Roger Conant was asked by the Dorchester Company of England to take charge of a newly established fishing station on Cape Ann. This enterprise was unsuccessful and Conant aspired to better his fortunes by founding a colony or plantation on the shore of the sheltered harbor of the Naumkeag Peninsula. This was the beginning of the town of Salem, so named by the first governor, John Endicott, who ousted Roger Conant in 1629, when this property of the Dorchester Company passed by purchase into the hands of the New England Company.

The first settlers who had fought famine, pestilence and red men were not consulted in the transaction but were transferred along with the land. They had established a refuge for those oppressed for conscience's sake, and Roger Conant, brave, resolute and patient, had fought the good fight with them.




Certificate of Membership in the Salem Marine Society, used in 1790, showing wharves and harbor




Title page of the log of Captain Nathaniel Hathorne, father of Nathaniel Hawthorne. This lettering at the top of the page was done by the author when a boy

But although they held meetings and protested against being treated as "slaves," they could make no opposition to the iron-handed zealot and aristocrat, John Endicott, who came to rule over them. Eighty settlers perished of hunger and disease during Governor Endicott's first winter among them, and when Winthrop, Saltonstall, Dudley and Johnson brought over a thousand people in seventeen ships in the year of 1629, they passed by afflicted Salem and made their settlements at Boston, Charlestown and Watertown.

"The homes, labors and successes of the first colonists of Salem would be unworthy of our attention were they associated with the lives of ordinary settlers in a new country. But small though the beginnings were these men were beginning to store up and to train the energy which was afterward to expand with tremendous force in the opening of the whole world to commerce and civilization, and in the establishment of the best things in American life."* They were the picked men of England, yoemanry for the most part, seeking to better their condition, interested in the great problems of religion and government. Dwelling along the harbor front, or on the banks of small rivers near at hand, they at once busied themselves cutting down trees and hewing planks to fashion pinnaces and shallops for traversing these waterways. Fish was a staple diet and the chief commodity of trade, and often averted famine while the scanty crops were being wrested from the first clearings. Thus these early sixteenth century men of Salem were more at home upon the water than upon the less friendly land, and it was inevitable that they should build larger craft for coastwise voyaging as fast as other settlements sprang into being to the north and south of them.

No more than ten years after the arrival of John Endicott,

*History of Essex County

shipbuilding was a thriving industry of Salem, and her seamen had begun to talk of sending their ventures as far away as the West Indies. In 1640 the West Indiaman *Desire* brought home cotton, tobacco and negroes from the Bahamas and salt from Tortugas. This ship *Desire* was a credit to her builders, for after opening the trade with the West Indies she made a passage to England in the amazingly brief time of twenty-three days, which would have been considered rapid sailing for a packet ship two hundred years later. In 1664 a local historian was able to record that "in this town are some very rich merchants." These merchants, most of them shipmasters as well, were destined to build up for their seaport a peculiar fame by reason of their genius for discovering new markets for their trading ventures and staking their lives and fortunes on the chance of finding rich cargoes where no other American ships had dreamed of venturing.

# CHAPTER II

## PHILIP ENGLISH AND HIS ERA

## (1680—1750)

IN the decade from 1685 to 1695 the infant commerce of Salem was fighting for its life. This period was called "the dark time when ye merchants looked for ye vessells with fear and trembling." Besides the common dangers of the sea, they had to contend with savage Indians who attacked the fishing fleet, with the heavy restrictions imposed by the Royal Acts of Trade, with the witchcraft delusion which turned every man's hand against his neighbor, and with French privateers which so ravaged the ventures of the Salem traders to the West Indies that the shipping annals of the time are thickly strewn with such incidents as these:

(1690)—"The ketch *Fellowship*, Captain Robert Glanville, *via* the Vineyard for Berwick on the Tweed, was taken by two French privateers and carried to Dunkirk."

(1695)—"The ship *Essex* of Salem, Captain John Beal, from Bilboa in Spain, had a battle at sea and loses John Samson, boatswain. This man and Thomas Roads, the gunner, had previously contracted that whoever of the two survived the other he should have all the property of the deceased."

Soon after this the tables were turned by the *Salem Packet* which captured a French ship off the Banks of Newfoundland. In the same year the ketch *Exchange*, Captain Thomas Marston, was taken by a French ship off Block Island. She was ransomed for two hundred and fifty pounds and brought into

Salem. "The son of the owner was carried to Placentia as a hostage for the payment of the ransom."

The ancient records of the First Church of Salem contain this quaint entry under date of July 25, 1677:

"The Lord having given a Comission to the Indians to take no less than 13 of the Fishing Ketches of Salem and Captivate the men (though divers of them cleared themselves and came home) it struck a great consternation into all the people here. The Pastor moved on the Lord's Day, and the whole people readily consented, to keep the Lecture Day following as a fast day; which was accordingly done and the work carried on by the Pastor, Mr. Hale, Mr. Chevers, and Mr. Gerrish, the higher ministers helping in prayer. The Lord was pleased to send in some of the Ketches on the Fast day which was looked on as a gracious smile of Providence. Also there had been 19 wounded men sent into Salem a little while before; also, a ketch with 40 men sent out from Salem as a man-of-war to recover the rest of the Ketches. The Lord give them Good Success."

In those very early and troublous times the Barbary pirates or Corsairs had begun to vex the New England skippers who boldly crossed the Atlantic in vessels that were much smaller than a modern canal boat or brick barge. These "Sallee rovers" hovered from the Mediterranean to the chops of the English Channel. Many a luckless seaman of Salem was held prisoner in the cities of Algiers while his friends at home endeavored to gather funds for his ransom. It was stated in 1661 that "for a long time previous the commerce of Massachusetts was much annoyed by Barbary Corsairs and that many of its seamen were held in bondage. One Captain Cakebread or Breadcake had two guns to cruise in search of Turkish pirates." In 1700 Benjamin Alford of Boston and William Bowditch of Salem related that "their friend Robert Carver of the latter

port was taken nine years before, a captive into Sally; that contributions had been made for his redemption; that the money was in the hands of a person here; that if they had the disposal of it, they could release Carver."

The end of the seventeenth century found the wilderness settlement of Salem rapidly expanding into a seaport whose commercial interests were faring to distant oceans. The town had grown along the water's edge beside which its merchants were beginning to build their spacious and gabled mansions. Their countinghouses overlooked the harbor, and their spy-glasses were alert to sweep the distant sea line for the home-coming of their ventures to Virginia, the West Indies and Europe. Their vessels were forty and sixty tons burden, mere cockle-shells for deep-water voyaging, but they risked storm and capture while they pushed farther and farther away from Salem as the prospect of profitable trade lured them on.

The sailmaker, the rigger, the ship chandler, and the ship-wright had begun to populate the harbor front, and among them swarmed the rough and headlong seamen from Heaven knew where, who shocked the godly Puritans of the older régime. Jack ashore was a bull in a china shop then as now, and history has recorded the lamentable but deserved fate of "one Henry Bull and companions in a vessel in our harbor who derided the Church of Christ and were afterward cast away among savage Indians by whom they were slain."

Now there came into prominence the first of a long line of illustrious shipping merchants of Salem, Philip English, who makes a commanding figure in the seafaring history of his time. A native of the Isle of Jersey, he came to Salem before 1670. He made voyages in his own vessels, commanded the ketch*

*The ketch of the eighteenth century was two-masted with square sails on her foremast, and a fore-and-aft sail on the mainmast, which was shorter than the foremast. The schooner rig was not used until 1720 and is said to have been originated by Captain Andrew Robinson of Gloucester.

*Speedwell* in 1676, and ten years later had so swiftly advanced his fortunes that he built him a mansion house on Essex Street, a solid, square-sided structure with many projecting porches and with upper stories overhanging the street. It stood for a hundred and fifty years, long known as "English's Great House," and linked the nineteenth century with the very early chapters of American history. In 1692, Philip English was perhaps the richest man of the New England Colonies, owning twenty-one vessels which traded with Bilboa, Barbados, St. Christopher's, the Isle of Jersey and the ports of France. He owned a wharf and warehouses, and fourteen buildings in the town.

One of his bills of lading, dated 1707, shows the pious imprint of his generation and the kind of commerce in which he was engaged. It reads in part:

"Shipped by the Grace of God, in good order and well conditioned, by Sam'll Browne, Phillip English, Capt. Wm. Bowditch, Wm. Pickering, and Sam'll Wakefield, in and upon the Good sloop called the *Mayflower* whereof is master under God for this present voyage Jno. Swasey, and now riding at anchor in the harbor of Salem, and by God's Grace bound for Virginia or Merriland. To say, twenty hogshats of Salt. . . . In witness whereof the Master or Purser of the said Sloop has affirmed to Two Bills of Lading . . . and so God send the Good Sloop to her desired port in Safety. Amen."

Another merchant of Philip English's time wrote in 1700 of the foreign commerce of Salem:

"Dry Merchantable codfish for the Markets of Spain and Portugal and the Straits. Refuse fish, lumber, horses and provisions for the West Indies. Returns made directly hence to England are sugar, molasses, cotton, wool and logwood for which we depend on the West Indies. Our own produce, a considerable quantity of whale and fish oil, whalebone, furs,

The Roger Williams house, built before 1635. Tradition asserts that preliminary examinations of those accused of witchcraft in 1692 were held here

(This photograph was made before a drug store was built in front of the house, and shows an old "town pump")

deer, elk and bear skins are annually sent to England. We have much Shipping here and freights are low."

To Virginia the clumsy, little sloops and ketches of Philip English carried "Molasses, Rum, Salt, Cider, Mackerel, Wooden Bowls, Platters, Pails, Kegs, Muscavado Sugar, and Codfish and brought back to Salem Wheat, Pork, Tobacco, Furs, Hides, old Pewter, Old Iron, Brass, Copper, Indian Corn and English Goods." The craft which crossed the Atlantic and made the West Indies in safety to pile up wealth for Philip English were no larger than those sloops and schooners which ply up and down the Hudson River to-day. Their masters made their way without sextant or "Practical Navigator," and as an old writer has described in a somewhat exaggerated vein:

"Their skippers kept their reckoning with chalk on a shingle, which they stowed away in the binnacle; and by way of observation they held up a hand to the sun. When they got him over four fingers they knew they were straight for Hole-in-the-Wall; three fingers gave them their course to the Double-headed Shop Key and two carried them down to Barbados."

The witchcraft frenzy invaded even the stately home of Philip English, the greatest shipowner of early Salem. His wife, a proud and aristocratic lady, was "cried against," examined and committed to prison in Salem. It is said that she was considered haughty and overbearing in her manner toward the poor, and that her husband's staunch adherence to the Church of England had something to do with her plight. At any rate, Mary English was arrested in her bedchamber and refused to rise, wherefore "guards were placed around the house and in the morning she attended the devotions of her family, kissed her children with great composure, proposed her plan for their education, took leave of them and then told the officer she was ready to die." Alas, poor woman, she had reason to be "persuaded that accusation was equal to condemnation." She lay

in prison six weeks where "her firmness was memorable. But being visited by a fond husband, her husband was also accused and confined in prison." The intercession of friends and the plea that the prison was overcrowded caused their removal to Arnold's jail in Boston until the time of trial. It brings to mind certain episodes of the French Reign of Terror to learn that they were taken to Boston on the same day with Giles Corey, George Jacobs, Alice Parker, Ann Pudeator, and Bridget Bishop, all of whom perished except Philip and Mary English. Both would have been executed had they not escaped death by flight from the Boston jail and seeking refuge in New York.

In his diary, under date of May 21, 1793, Rev. William Bentley, of Salem, pastor of the East Church from 1783 to 1819, wrote of the witchcraft persecution of this notable shipping merchant and his wife:

"May 21st, 1793. Substance of Madam Susannah Harthorne's account of her grandfather English, etc. Mr. English was a Jerseyman, came young to America and lived with Mr. W. Hollingsworth, whose only child he married. He owned above twenty sail of vessels. His wife had the best education of her times. Wrote with great ease, and has left a specimen of her needlework in her infancy or youth. She had already owned her Covenant and was baptised with her children and now intended to be received at the Communion on the next Lord's Day. On Saturday night she was cried out upon. The Officers, High Sheriff, and Deputy with attendants came at eleven at night. When the servant came up Mr. English imagined it was upon business, not having had the least notice of the suspicions respecting his wife. They were to bed together in the western chamber of their new house raised in 1690, and had a large family of servants.

"The Officers came in soon after the servant who so alarmed Mr. English that with difficulty he found his cloathes which

he could not put on without help. The Officers came into the chamber, following the servant, and opening the curtains read the Mittimus. She was then ordered to rise but absolutely refused. Her husband continued walking the chamber all night, but the Officers contented themselves with a guard upon the House till morning. In the morning they required of her to rise, but she refused to rise before her usual hour. After breakfast with her husband and children, and seeing all the servants, of whom there were twenty in the House, she concluded to go with the officers and she was conducted to the Cat and Wheel, a public house east of the present Centre Meeting House on the opposite side of the way. Six weeks she was confined in the front chamber, in which she received the visits of her husband three times a day and as the floor was single she kept a journal of the examinations held below which she constantly sent to Boston.

"After six weeks her husband was accused, and their friends obtained that they should be sent on to Boston till their Trial should come on. In Arnold's custody they had bail and liberty of the town, only lodging in the Gaol. The Rev. Moody and Williard of Boston visited them and invited them to the public worship on the day before they were to return to Salem for Trial. Their text was that they that are persecuted in one city, let them flee to another. After Meeting the Ministers visited them at the Gaol, and asked them whether they took notice of the discourse, and told them their danger and urged them to escape since so many had suffered. Mr. English replied, 'God will not permit them to touch me.' Mrs. English said: 'Do you not think the sufferers innocent?' He (Moody) said 'Yes.' She then added, 'Why may we not suffer also?' The Ministers then told him if he would not carry his wife away they would.

"The gentlemen of the town took care to provide at midnight

a conveyance, encouraged by the Governor, Gaoler, etc., and Mr. and Mrs. English with their eldest child and daughter, were conveyed away, and the Governor gave letters to Governor Fletcher of New York who came out and received them, accompanied by twenty private gentlemen, and carried them to his house.

"They remained twelve months in the city. While there they heard of the wants of the poor in Salem and sent a vessel of corn for their relief, a bushel for each child. Great advantages were proposed to detain them at New York, but the attachment of the wife to Salem was not lost by all her sufferings, and she urged a return. They were received with joy upon their return and the Town had a thanksgiving on the occasion. Noyes, the prosecutor, dined with him on that day in his own house."

That a man of such solid station should have so narrowly escaped death in the witchcraft fury indicates that no class was spared. While his sturdy seamen were fiddling and drinking in the taverns of the Salem water-front, or making sail to the roaring chorus of old-time chanties, their employer, a prince of commerce for his time, was dreading a miserable death for himself and that high-spirited dame, his wife, on Gallows Hill, at the hands of the stern-faced young sheriff of Salem.

Philip English returned to Salem after the frenzy had passed and rounded out a shipping career of fifty years, living until 1736. His instructions to one of his captains may help to picture the American commerce of two centuries ago. In 1722 he wrote to "Mr. John Tauzel":

"Sir, you being appointed Master of my sloop *Sarah*, now Riding in ye Harbor of Salem, and Ready to Saile, my Order is to you that you take ye first opportunity of wind and Weather to Saile and make ye best of yr. way for Barbadoes or Leew'd

Island, and there Enter and Clear yr vessel and Deliver yr Cargo according to Orders and Bill of Lading and Make Saile of my twelve Hogsh'd of fish to my best advantage, and make Returne in yr Vessel or any other for Salem in such Goods as you shall see best, and if you see Cause to take a freight to any port or hire her I lieve it with your Best Conduct, Managem't or Care for my best advantage. So please God to give you a prosperous voyage, I remain yr Friend and Owner.

"PHILIP ENGLISH."

England had become already jealous of the flourishing maritime commerce of the Colonies and was devising one restrictive Act of Parliament after another to hamper what was viewed as a dangerous rivalry. In 1668, Sir Joshua Child, once chairman of the East India Company, delivered himself of this choleric and short-sighted opinion:

"Of all the American plantations His Majesty has none so apt for the building of ships as New England, nor none comparably so qualified for the breeding of seamen, not only by reason of the natural industry of the people, but principally by reason of their cod and mackerel fisheries, and in my opinion there is nothing more prejudicial and in prospect more dangerous to any mother kingdom than the increase of shipping in her colonies, plantations or provinces."

This selfish view-point sought not only to prevent American shipowners from conducting a direct trade with Europe but tried also to cripple the prosperous commerce between the Colonies and the West Indies. The narrow-minded politicians who sacrificed both the Colonies and the Mother country could not kill American shipping even by the most ingenious restrictive acts, and the hardy merchants of New England violated or evaded these unjust edicts after the manner indicated in the following letter of instructions given to Captain Richard

Derby of Salem, for a voyage to the West Indies as master and part owner of the schooner *Volante* in 1741:

"If you should go among the French endeavour to get salt at St. Martins, but if you should fall so low as Statia, and any Frenchman should make you a good Offer with good security, or by making your Vessel a Dutch bottom, or by any other means practicable in order to your getting among ye Frenchmen, embrace it. Among whom if you should ever arrive, be sure to give strict orders amongst your men not to sell the least trifle unto them on any terms, lest they should make your Vessel liable to a seizure. Also secure a permit so as for you to trade there next voyage, which you may undoubtedly do through your factor or by a *little greasing* some others. Also make a proper Protest at any port you stop at."

This means that if needs be, Captain Derby is to procure a Dutch registry and make the *Volante* a Dutch vessel for the time being, and thus not subject to the British Navigation Acts. It was easy to buy such registries for temporary use and to masquerade under English, French, Spanish or Dutch colors, if a "little greasing" was applied to the customs officers in the West Indies.

On the margin of Captain Derby's sailing orders is scrawled the following memorandum:

"Capt. Derby: If you trade at Barbadoes buy me a negroe boy about siventeen years old, which if you do, advise Mr. Clarke of yt so he may not send one.

(Signed) Benj. Gerrish, Jr."

Such voyages as these were risky ventures for the eighteenth century insurance companies, whose courage is to be admired for daring to underwrite these vessels at all. For a voyage of the *Lydia* from Salem to Madeira in 1761, the premium rate was 11 per cent., and in the following year 14 per cent. was

By permission of the Essex Institute

The Philip English "Great House," built in 1685 and torn down in 1833. The home of the first great shipping merchant of the colonies

demanded for a voyage to Jamaica. The *Three Sisters*, bound to Santo Domingo, was compelled to pay 23 per cent. premium, and 14 per cent. for the return voyage. The lowest rate recorded for this era was 8 per cent. on the schooner *Friendship* of Salem to Quebec in 1760. For a Madeira voyage from Salem to-day the insurance rate would be $1\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. as compared with 11 per cent. then; to Jamaica $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. instead of 14 per cent. in the days when the underwriters had to risk confiscation, violation of the British Navigation Acts, and capture by privateers, or pirates, in addition to the usual dangers of the deep.

Among the biographical sketches in the records of the Salem Marine Society is that of Captain Michael Driver. It is a concise yet crowded narrative and may serve to show why insurance rates were high. "In the year 1759, he commanded the schooner *Three Brothers*, bound to the West Indies," runs the account. "He was taken by a privateer under English colors, called the *King of Russia*, commanded by Captain James Inclicto, of nine guns, and sent into Antigua. Her cargo was value at £550. Finding no redress he came home. He sailed again in the schooner *Betsey* for Guadaloupe; while on his passage was taken by a French frigate and sent into above port. He ransomed the vessel for four thousand livres and left three hostages and sailed for home November, 1761, and took command of schooner *Mary*, under a flag of truce, to go and pay the ransom and bring home the hostages.

"He was again captured, contrary to the laws of nations, by the English privateer *Revenge*, James McDonald, master, sent to New Providence, Bahama. He made protest before the authorities and was set at liberty with vessel and cargo. He pursued his voyage to Cape Francois, redeemed the hostages, and Sept. 6, 1762, was ready to return, but Monsieur Blanch, commanding a French frigate, seized the vessel, took out

hostages and crew and put them on board the frigate bound to St. Jago, Cuba. He was detained till December, and vessel returned. Worn out and foodless he was obliged to go to Jamaica for repairs. On his arrival home his case was represented to the Colonial Government and transmitted to Governor Shirley at New Providence, but no redress was made."

Many of these small vessels with crews of four to six men were lost by shipwreck and now and then one can read between the lines of some scanty chronicle of disaster astonishing romances of maritime suffering and adventure. For example in 1677, "a vessel arrived at Salem which took Captain Ephriam How of New Haven, the survivor of his crew, from a desolate island where *eight months* he suffered exceedingly from cold and hunger."

In the seventeenth century Cape Cod was as remote as and even more inaccessible than Europe. A bark of thirty tons burden, Anthony Dike master, was wrecked near the end of the Cape and three of the crew were frozen to death. The two survivors "got some fire and lived there by such food as they had saved for *seven weeks* until an Indian found them. Dike was of the number who perished."

Robinson Crusoe could have mastered difficulties no more courageously than the seamen of the ketch *Providence*, wrecked on a voyage to the West Indies. "Six of her crew were drowned, but the Master, mate and a sailor, who was badly wounded, reached an island half a mile off where they found another of the company. They remained there eight days, living on salt fish and cakes made from a barrel of flour washed ashore. They found a piece of touch wood after four days which the mate had in his chest and a piece of flint with which, having a small knife they struck a fire. They framed a boat with a tarred mainsail and some hoops and then fastened pieces of board to them. With a boat so constructed they sailed ten

leagues to Anquila and St. Martins where they were kindly received."

There was also Captain Jones of the brig *Adventure* which foundered at sea while coming home from Trinidad. All hands were lost except the skipper, who got astride a wooden or "Quaker" gun which had broken adrift from the harmless battery with which he had hoped to intimidate pirates. "He fought off the sharks with his feet" and clung to his buoyant ordnance until he was picked up and carried into Havana.

In 1759 young Samuel Gardner of Salem, just graduated from Harvard College, made a voyage to Gibraltar with Captain Richard Derby. The lad's diary* contains some interesting references to the warlike hazards of a routine trading voyage, besides revealing, in an attractive way, the ingenuous nature of this nineteen-year-old youngster of the eighteenth century. His daily entries read in part:

1759. Oct. 19—Sailed from Salem. Very sick.

20—I prodigious sick, no comfort at all.

21—I remain very sick, the first Sabbath I have spent from Church this long time. Little Sleep this Night.

24—A little better contented, but a Sailor's life is a poor life.

31—Fair pleasant weather, if it was always so, a sea life would be tolerable.

. . . Nov. 11—This makes the fourth Sunday I have been out. Read Dr. Beveridge's "Serious Thoughts."

12—Saw a sail standing to S.W. I am quartered at the aftermost gun and its opposite with Captain Clifford. We fired a shot at her and she hoisted Dutch colors.

13—I have entertained myself with a Romance, *viz.*, "The History of the Parish Girl."

14—Quite pleasant. Here we may behold the Works of God in the Mighty Deep. Happy he who beholds aright.

* Historical Collections of the Essex Institute.

15—Between 2 and 3 this morning we saw two sail which chased us, the ship fired 3 shots at us which we returned. They came up with us by reason of a breeze which she took before we did. She proved to be the ship *Cornwall* from Bristol.

21—Bishop Beveridge employed my time.

23—We now begin to approach to land. May we have a good sight of it. At eight o'clock two Teriffa (Barbary) boats came out after us, they fired at us which we returned as merrily. They were glad to get away as well as they could. We stood after one, but it is almost impossible to come up with the piratical dogs.

28—Gibralter—Went on shore. Saw the soldiers in the Garrison exercise. They had a cruel fellow for an officer for he whipt them barbarously. . . . After dinner we went out and saw the poor soldiers lickt again.

. . . Dec. 10—Benj. Moses, a Jew, was on board. I had some discourse with him about his religion . . . Poor creature, he errs greatly. I endeavored to set him right, but he said for a conclusion that his Father and Grandfather were Jews and if they were gone to Hell he would go there, too, by choice, which I exposed as a great piece of Folly and Stupidity. In the morning we heard a firing and looked out in the Gut and there was a snow attacked by 3 of the piratical Tereffa boats. Two cutters in the Government service soon got under sail, 3 men-of-war that lay in the Roads manned their barges and sent them out as did a Privateer. We could now perceive her (the snow) to have struck, but they soon retook her. She had only four swivels and 6 or 8 men . . . They got some prisoners (of the pirates) but how many I cannot learn, which it is to be hoped will meet with their just reward which I think would be nothing short of hanging. . . . Just at dusk came on board of us two Gentlemen, one of which is an Officer on board a man-of-war, the other belongs to the *Granada* in

the King's Service. The former (our people say) was in the skirmish in some of the barges. He could have given us a relation of it, but we, not knowing of it, prevented what would have been very agreeable to me. . . . It is now between 9 and 10 o'clock at night which is the latest I have set up since I left Salem."

This Samuel Gardner was a typical Salem boy of his time, well brought up, sent to college, and eager to go to sea and experience adventures such as his elders had described. Of a kindred spirit in the very human quality of the documents he left for us was Francis Boardman, a seaman, who rose to a considerable position as a Salem merchant. His ancient log books contain between their battered and discolored canvas covers the records of his voyages between 1767 and 1774. Among the earliest are the logs of the ship *Vaughan* in which Francis Boardman sailed as mate. He kept the log and having a bent for scribbling on whatever blank paper his quill could find, he filled the fly-leaves of these sea journals with more interesting material than the routine entries of wind, weather and ship's daily business. Scrawled on one ragged leaf in what appears to be the preliminary draft of a letter:

"Dear Polly—thes lines comes with My Love to you. Hoping thes will find you in as good Health as they Leave me at this Time, Blessed be God for so Great a Massey (mercy)."

Young Francis Boardman was equipped with epistolary ammunition for all weathers and conditions, it would seem, for in another log of a hundred and fifty years ago, he carefully wrote on a leaf opposite his personal expense account:

"Madam:

"Your Late Behavour towards me, you are sensible cannot have escaped my Ear. I must own you was once the person of whom I could Not have formed such an Opinion. For my part, at present I freely forgive you and only blame myself for

putting so much confidence in a person so undeserving. I have now conquered my pashun so much (though I must confess at first it was with great difficulty), that I never think of you, nor I believe never shall without despising the Name of a person who dared to use me in so ungrateful a manner. I shall now conclude myself, though badley used, not your Enemy."

It may be fairly suspected that Francis Boardman owned a copy of some early "Complete Letter Writer," for on another page he begins but does not finish. "A Letter from One Sister to Another to Enquire of Health." Also he takes pains several times to draft these dutiful but far from newsy lines:

"Honored Father and Mother—Thes lines comes with my Deuty to you. Hoping They will find you in as good Health as they Leave me at this Time. Blessed be God for so Great a Massey—Honored Father and Mother."

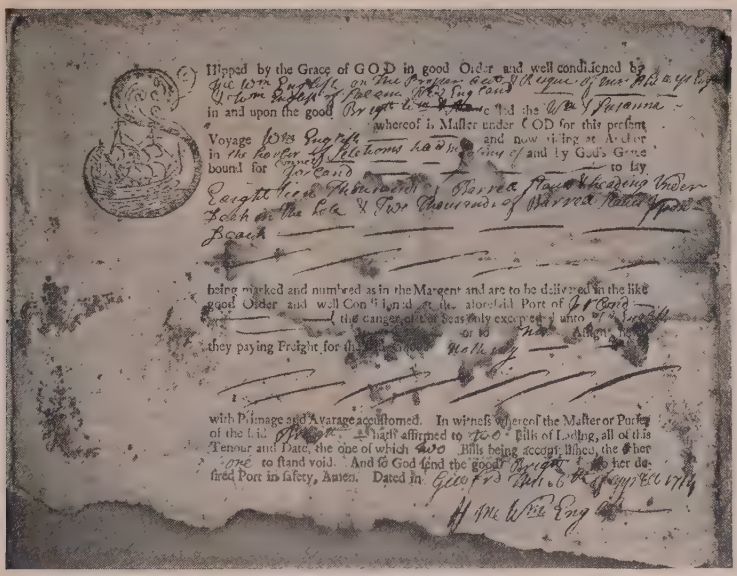
In a log labeled "From London Toward Cadiz, Spain, in the good ship *Vaughan*, Benj. Davis, Master, 1767," Francis Boardman became mightily busy with his quill and the season being spring, he began to scrawl poetry between the leaves which were covered with such dry entries as "Modt. Gales and fair weather. Set the jibb. Bent topmast stay sail." One of these pages of verse begins in this fashion:

"One Morning, one Morning in May,
The fields were adorning with Costlay Array.
I Chanced for To hear as I walked By a Grove
A Shepyard Laymenting for the Loss of his Love."

But the most moving and ambitious relic of the poetic taste of this long vanished Yankee seaman is a ballad preserved in the same log of the *Vaughan*. Its spelling is as filled with fresh surprises as its sentiment is profoundly tragic. It runs as follows:

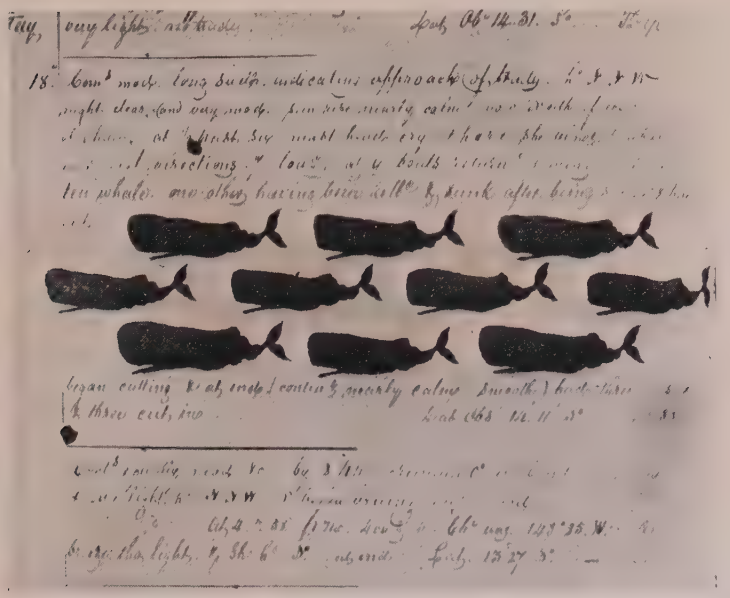
1 "In Gosport* of Late there a Damsil Did Dwell,
for Wit and for Beuty Did she maney Exsel.

* Gosport Navy Yard, England.



Shipped by the Grace of GOD in good Order and well conditioned by
in and upon the good
whereof is Master under GOD for this present
Voyage
and now riding at Anchor
in the
and by God's Grace
bound for
to say
being marked and numbered as in the Margent and are to be delivered in the like
good Order and well Conditioned at the aforesaid Port of
they paying Freight for the
with Primage and Avarage accustomed. In witness whereof the Master or Purser
of the said
hath affirmed to
Bills of Lading, all of this
Tenour and Date, the one of which
Bills being accomplished, the other
to stand void. And so God send the good
to her desired Port in safety, Amen. Dated in

A bill of lading of the time of Philip English, dated 1716



The log of a Salem whaler, showing how he recorded the number of whales he took

2 A Young man he Corted hir to be his Dear
And By his Trade was a Ship Carpentir.
3 he ses "My Dear Molly if you will agrea
And Will then Conscent for to Marey me
4 Your Love it will Eas me of Sorro and Care
If you will But Marey a ship Carpentir."
5 With blushes mor Charming then Roses in June,
She ans'red (") Sweet William for to Wed I am to young.
6 Young Men thay are fickle and so Very Vain,
If a Maid she is Kind thay will quickly Disdane.
7 the Most Beutyfullyst Woman that ever was Born,
When a man has insnared hir, hir Beuty he scorns. (")
8 (He) (") O, My Dear Molly, what Makes you Say so?
Thi Beuty is the Haven to wich I will go.
9 If you Will consent for the Church for to Stear
there I will Cast anchor and stay with my Dear.
10 I ne're Shall be Cloyedd with the Charms of thy Love,
this Love is as True as the tru Turtle Dove.
11 All that I do Crave is to marey my Dear
And arter we are maried no Dangers we will fear. (")
12 (She) "The Life of a Virgen, Sweet William, I Prize
for marrying Brings Trouble and sorro Like-wise. (")
13 But all was in Vane tho His Sute she did Denie,
yet he did Purswade hir for Love to Comeply.
14 And by his Cunneng hir Hart Did Betray
and with Too lude Desire he led hir Astray.
15 This Past on a while and at Length you will hear,
the King wanted Sailors and to Sea he must Stear.
16 This Greved the fare Damsil allmost to the Hart
To think of Hir True Love so soon she must Part.
17 She ses (") my Dear Will as you go to sea
Remember the Vows that you made unto me. (")
18 With the Kindest Expresens he to hir Did Say
(") I will marey my Molly air I go away.
19 That means tomorrow to me you will Come.
then we will be maried and our Love Carried on. (")
20 With the Kindest Embraces they Parted that Nite
She went for to meet him next Morning by Lite.
21 he ses (") my Dear Charmer, you must go with me
Before we are married a friend for to see. (")
22 he Led hir thru Groves and Valleys so deep
That this fare Damsil Began for to Weep.

23 She ses (") My Dear William, you Lead me Astray
on Purpos my innocent Life to be BeTray. (")
24 (He) (") Those are truc Words and none can you save, (")
for all this hole Nite I have Been digging your grave."
25 A Spade Standing By and a Grave thare she See,
(She) (") O, Must this Grave Be a Bride Bed to Me? (")

In 1774 we find Francis Boardman as captain of the sloop *Adventure*, evidently making his first voyage as master. He was bound for the West Indies, and while off the port of St. Pierre in Martinique he penned these gloomy remarks in his log:

"This Morning I Drempt that 2 of my upper teeth and one Lower Dropt out and another Next the Lower one wore away as thin as a wafer and Sundry other fritful Dreams. What will be the Event of it I can't tell."

Other superstitions seem to have vexed his mind, for in the same log he wrote as follows:

"this Blot I found the 17th. I can't tell but Something Very bad is going to Hapen to me this Voyage. I am afeard but God onley Noes What may hapen on board the Sloop *Adventure*—the first Voyage of being Master."

Sailing "From Guardalopa Toward Boston," Captain Francis Boardman made this final entry in his log:

"The End of this Voyage for wich I am Very thankfull on Acct. of a Grate Deal of Truble by a bad mate. his name is William Robson of Salem. he was Drunk most Part of the Voyage."

# CHAPTER III

## SOME EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY PIRATES

(1670–1725)

THE pirates of the Spanish Main and the southern coasts of this country have enjoyed almost a monopoly of popular interest in fact and fiction. As early as 1632, however, the New England coast was plagued by pirates and the doughty merchant seamen of Salem and other ports were sallying forth to fight them for a hundred years on end.

In 1670 the General Court published in Boston, "by beat of drum," a proclamation against a ship at the Isle of Shoals suspected of being a pirate, and three years later another official broadside was hurled against "piracy and mutiny." The report of an expedition sent out from Boston in 1689, in the sloop *Mary*, against notorious pirates named Thomas Hawkins and Thomas Pound, has all the dramatic elements and properties of a tale of pure adventure. It relates that "being off of Wood's Hole, we were informed there was a Pirate at Tarpolin Cove, and soon after we espyed a Sloop on head of us which we supposed to be the Sloop wherein sd. Pound and his Company were. We made what Sayle we could and soon came near up with her, spread our King's Jack and fired a shot athwart her forefoot, upon which a red fflag was put out on the head of the sd. Sloop's mast. Our Capn. ordered another shot to be fired athwart her forefoot, but they not striking, we came up with them. Our Capn. commanded us to fire at them which we accordingly did and called to them to strike to the King of England.

"Pound, standing on the Quarter deck with his naked Sword flourishing in his hand, said; 'Come on Board you Doggs, I will strike you presently,' or words to that purpose, his men standing by him upon the deck with guns in their hands, and he taking up his Gun, they discharged a Volley at us and we at them again, and so continued firing one at the other for some space of time.

"In which engagement our Capn. Samuel Pease was wounded in the Arme, in the side and in the thigh; but at length bringing them under our power, wee made Sayle towards Roade Island and on Saturday the fifth of sd. October gut our wounded men on shore and procured Surgeons to dress them. Our said Captaine lost much blood by his wounds and was brought very low, but on friday after, being the eleventh day of the said October, being brought on board the vessell intending to come away to Boston, was taken with bleeding afresh, so that we were forced to carry him on Shore again to Road Island, and was followed with bleeding at his Wounds, and fell into fitts, but remained alive until Saturday morning the twelfth of Octbr. aforesaid when he departed this Life."

This admirably brief narrative shows that Thomas Pounds, strutting his quarter deck under his red "fflagg" and flourishing his naked sword and crying "Come on, you doggs," was a proper figure of a seventeenth century pirate, and that poor Captain Pease of the sloop *Mary* was a gallant seaman who won his victory after being wounded unto death. Pirates received short shift and this crew was probably hanged in Boston as were scores of their fellows in that era.

Puritan wives and sweethearts waited months and years for missing ships which never again dropped anchor in the land-locked harbor of Salem, and perhaps if any tidings ever came it was no more than this:

"May 21 (1697)—The ketch *Margaret* of Salem, Captain

Peter Henderson was chased ashore near Funshal, Madeira, by pirates and lost. Of what became of the officers and crew the account says nothing."

In July of 1703, the brigantine *Charles*, Capt. Daniel Plowman, was fitted out at Boston as a privateer to cruise against the French and Spanish with whom Great Britain was at war. When the vessel had been a few days at sea, Captain Plowman was taken very ill. Thereupon the crew locked him in the cabin and left him to die while they conspired to run off with the brigantine and turn pirates. The luckless master conveniently died, his body was tossed overboard and one John Quelch assumed the command. The crew seem to have agreed that he was the man for their purpose and they unanimously invited him to "sail on a private cruise to the coast of Brazil." In those waters they plundered several Portuguese ships, and having collected sufficient booty or becoming homesick, they determined to seek their native land. With striking boldness Quelch navigated the brigantine back to Marblehead and primed his men with a story of the voyage which should cover up their career as pirates.

Suspicion was turned against them, however, the vessel was searched, and much plunder revealed. The pirates tried to escape along shore, but most of them, Quelch included, were captured at Gloucester, the Isle of Shoals, and Marblehead.

One of the old Salem records has preserved the following information concerning the fate of these rascals:

(1704)—"Major Stephen Sewall, Captain John Turner and 40 volunteers embark in a shallop and Fort Pinnace after Sun Set to go in Search of some Pirates who sailed from Gloucester in the morning. Major Sewall brought into Salem a Galley, Captain Thomas Lowrimore, on board of which he had captured some pirates and some of their Gold at the Isle of Shoals Major Sewall carries the Pirates to Boston under a strong

guard. Captain Quelch and five of his crew are hung. About 13 of the ship's company remain under sentence of death and several more are cleared."

Tradition records that a Salem poet of that time was moved to write of the foregoing episode:

> "Ye pirates who against God's laws did fight,
> Have all been taken which is very right.
> Some of them were old and others young
> And on the flats of Boston they were hung."

There is a vivacious and entertaining flavor in the following chronicle and comment:

"May 1, 1718, several of the ship *Hopewell's* crew can testify that near Hispaniola they met with pirates who robbed and abused their crew and compelled their mate, James Logun of Charlestown to go with them, as they had no artist; having lost several of their company in an engagement. As to what sort of an artist these gentlemen rovers were deficient in, whether dancing, swimming or writing master, or a master of the mechanical arts, we have no authority for stating."

The official account of the foregoing misfortune is to be found among the notarial records of Essex county and reads as follows:

"Depositions of Richard Manning, John Crowell, and Aaron Crowell, all of Salem, and belonging to the crew of Captain Thomas Ellis, commander of the ship *Hopewell*, bound from Island of Barbadoes to Saltatuda. Missing of that Island and falling to Leeward we shaped our course for some of the Bahama Islands in hopes to get salt there, but nigh ye Island of Hispaniola we unhappily met with a pirate, being a sloop of between thirty and forty men, one Capt. Charles, commander, his sirname we could not learn. They took us, boarded us and abused several of us shamefully, and took what small matters we had,

even our very cloathes and particularly beat and abused our Mate, whose name was James Logun of Charlestowne, and him they forcibly carried away with them and threatened his life if he would not go, which they were ye more in earnest for insomuch as they had no artist on board, as we understood, having a little before that time had an Engagem't. with a ship of force which had killed several of them as we were Informed by some of them. Ye said James Logun was very unwilling to go with them and informed some of us that he knew not whether he had best to dye or go with them, these Deponents knowing of him to be an Ingenious sober man. To ye truth of all we have hereunto sett our hand having fresh Remembrance thereof, being but ye fifth day of March last past, when we were taken. Salem, May 1, 1718."

In the following year Captain John Shattuck entered his protest at Salem against capture by pirates. He sailed from Jamaica for New England and in sight of Long Island (West Indies) was captured by a "Pyrat" of 12 guns and 120 men, under the command of Captain Charles Vain, who took him to Crooked Island (Bahamas), plundered him of various articles, stripped the brig, abused some of his men and finally let him go. "Coming, however, on a winter coast, his vessel stripped of needed sails, he was blown off to the West Indies and did not arrive in Salem until the next spring."

In 1724 two notorious sea rogues, Nutt and Phillip, were cruising off Cape Ann, their topsails in sight of Salem harbor mouth. They took a sloop commanded by one Andrew Harradine of Salem and thereby caught a Tartar. Harradine and his crew rose upon their captors, killed both Nutt and Phillip and their officers, put the pirate crew under hatches, and sailed the vessel to Boston where the pirates were turned over to the authorities to be fitted with hempen kerchiefs.

On the first of May, 1725, a Salem brigantine commanded by Captain Dove sailed into her home harbor having on board one Philip Ashton, a lad from Marblehead who had been given up as dead for almost three years. He had been captured by pirates, and after escaping from them lived alone for a year and more on a desert island off the coast of Honduras. Philip Ashton wrote a journal of his adventures which was first published many years ago. His story is perhaps the most entertaining narrative of eighteenth century piracy that has come down to present times. Little is known of the career of this lad of Marblehead before or after his adventures and misfortunes in the company of pirates. It is recorded that when he hurried to his home from the ship which had fetched him into Salem harbor there was great rejoicing. On the following Sunday Rev. John Barnard preached a sermon concerning the miraculous escape of Philip Ashton. His text was taken from the third chapter of Daniel, seventeenth verse: "If it be so our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thy hands, O King."

It is also known that at about the same time that Philip Ashton was captured by pirates his cousin, Nicholas Merritt, met with a like misfortune at sea. He made his escape after several months of captivity and returned to his home a year later when there was another thanksgiving for a wanderer returned.

What the early shipmasters of Salem and nearby ports had to fear in the eighteenth century may be more clearly comprehended if a part of the journal of Philip Ashton is presented as he is said to have written it upon his return home. It begins as follows:

"On Friday, the 15th of June, 1722, after being out some time in a schooner with four men and a boy, off Cape Sable, I stood in for Port Rossaway, designing to lie there all Sunday. Having

A page from Falconer's Marine Dictionary (18th Century)

**Figure 4:** a snow, (5) a ketch, (6) a brig or brigantine, (7) a bilander, (8) a xebec, (9) a schooner, (10) a galliot, (11) a dogger, (12 and 13) two gallies, one under sail, the other rowing, (14) a sloop

arrived about four in the afternoon, we saw, among other vessels which had reached the port before us, a brigantine supposed to be inward bound from the West Indies. After remaining three or four hours at anchor, a boat from the brigantine came alongside, with four hands, who leapt on deck, and suddenly drawing out pistols, and brandishing cutlasses, demanded the surrender both of ourselves and our vessel. All remonstrance was vain; nor indeed, had we known who they were before boarding us could we have made any effectual resistance, being only five men and a boy, and were thus under the necessity of submitting at discretion. We were not single in misfortune, as thirteen or fourteen fishing vessels were in like manner surprised the same evening.

"When carried on board the brigantine, I found myself in the hands of Ned Low, an infamous pirate, whose vessel had two great guns, four swivels, and about forty-two men. I was strongly urged to sign the articles of agreement among the pirates and to join their number, which I steadily refused and suffered much bad usage in consequence. At length being conducted, along with five of the prisoners, to the quarterdeck, Low came up to us with pistols in his hand, and loudly demanded: 'Are any of you married men?'

"This unexpected question, added to the sight of the pistols, struck us all speechless; we were alarmed lest there was some secret meaning in his words, and that he would proceed to extremities, therefore none could reply. In a violent passion he cocked a pistol, and clapping it to my head, cried out: 'You dog, why don't you answer?' swearing vehemently at the same time that he would shoot me through the head. I was sufficiently terrified by his threats and fierceness, but rather than lose my life in so trifling a matter, I ventured to pronounce, as loud as I durst speak, that I was not married. Hereupon he seemed to be somewhat pacified, and turned away.

"It appeared that Low was resolved to take no married men whatever, which often seemed surprising to me until I had been a considerable time with him. But his own wife had died lately before he became a pirate; and he had a young child at Boston, for whom he entertained such tenderness, on every lucid interval from drinking and revelling, that on mentioning it, I have seen him sit down and weep plentifully. Thus I concluded that his reason for taking only single men, was probably that they might have no ties, such as wives and children, to divert them from his service, and render them desirous of returning home.

"The pirates finding force of no avail in compelling us to join them, began to use persuasion instead of it. They tried to flatter me into compliance, by setting before me the share I should have in their spoils, and the riches which I should become master of; and all the time eagerly importuned me to drink along with them. But I still continued to resist their proposals, whereupon Low, with equal fury as before, threatened to shoot me through the head, and though I earnestly entreated my release, he and his people wrote my name, and that of my companions, in their books.

"On the 19th of June, the pirates changed the privateer, as they called their vessel, and went into a new schooner belonging to Marblehead, which they had captured. They then put all the prisoners whom they designed sending home on board of the brigantine, and sent her to Boston, which induced me to make another unsuccessful attempt for liberty; but though I fell on my knees to Low, he refused to let me go; thus I saw the brigantine depart, with the whole captives, excepting myself and seven more.

"A very short time before she departed, I had nearly effected my escape; for a dog belonging to Low being accidentally left on shore, he ordered some hands into a boat to bring it off.

Thereupon two young men, captives, both belonging to Marblehead, readily leapt into the boat, and I considering that if I could once get on shore, means might be found of effecting my escape, endeavored to go along with them. But the quartermaster, called Russell, catching hold of my shoulder, drew me back. As the young men did not return he thought I was privy to their plot, and, with the most outrageous oaths, snapped his pistol, on my denying all knowledge of it. The pistol missing fire, however, only served to enrage him the more; he snapped it three times again, and as often it missed fire; on which he held it overboard, and then it went off. Russell on this drew his cutlass, and was about to attack me in the utmost fury, when I leapt down into the hold and saved myself.

"Off St. Michael's the pirates took a large Portuguese pink, laden with wheat, coming out of the road; and being a good sailor, and carrying fourteen guns, transferred their company into her. It afterwards became necessary to careen her, whence they made three islands called Triangles lying about forty leagues to the eastward of Surinam.

"In heaving down the pink, Low had ordered so many men to the shrouds and yards that the ports, by her heeling, got under water, and the sea rushing in, she overset; he and the doctor were then in the cabin, and as soon as he observed the water gushing in, he leaped out of the stern port while the doctor attempted to follow him. But the violence of the sea repulsed the latter, and he was forced back into the cabin. Low, however, contrived to thrust his arm into the port, and dragging him out, saved his life. Meanwhile, the vessel completely overset. Her keel turned out of the water; but as the hull filled she sunk in the depth of about six fathoms.

"The yardarms striking the ground, forced the masts somewhat above the water; as the ship overset, the people, got from the shrouds and yards, upon the hull, and as the hull went

down, they again resorted to the rigging, rising a little out of the sea.

"Being an indifferent swimmer, I was reduced to great extremity; for along with other light lads, I had been sent up to the main-top-gallant yard; and the people of a boat who were now occupied in preserving the men refusing to take me in, I was compelled to attempt reaching the buoy. This I luckily accomplished, and as it was large secured myself there until the boat approached. I once more requested the people to take me in, but they still refused, as the boat was full. I was uncertain whether they designed leaving me to perish in this situation; however, the boat being deeply laden made way very slowly, and one of my comrades, captured at the same time with myself, calling to me to forsake the buoy and swim toward her, I assented, and reaching the boat, he drew me on board. Two men, John Bell, and Zana Gourdon, were lost in the pink.

"Though the schooner in company was very near at hand, her people were employed mending their sails under an awning and knew nothing of the accident until the boat full of men got alongside.

"The pirates having thus lost their principal vessel, and the greatest part of their provisions and water, were reduced to great extremities for want of the latter. They were unable to get a supply at the Triangles, nor on account of calms and currents, could they make the island of Tobago. Thus they were forced to stand for Grenada, which they reached after being on short allowance for sixteen days together.

"Grenada was a French settlement, and Low, on arriving, after having sent all his men below, except a sufficient number to maneuver the vessel, said he was from Barbadoes; that he had lost the water on board, and was obliged to put in here for a supply.

"The people entertained no suspicion of his being a pirate, but afterward supposing him a smuggler, thought it a good opportunity to make a prize of his vessel. Next day, therefore, they equipped a large sloop of seventy tons and four guns with about thirty hands, as sufficient for the capture, and came alongside while Low was quite unsuspicious of their design. But this being evidently betrayed by their number and actions, he quickly called ninety men on deck, and, having eight guns mounted, the French sloop became an easy prey.

"Provided with these two vessels, the pirates cruised about in the West Indies, taking seven or eight prizes, and at length arrived at the island of Santa Cruz, where they captured two more. While lying there Low thought he stood in need of a medicine chest, and, in order to procure one sent four Frenchmen in a vessel he had taken to St. Thomas's, about twelve leagues distant, with money to purchase it; promising them liberty, and the return of all their vessels for the service. But he declared at the same time if it proved otherwise, he would kill the rest of the men, and burn the vessels. In little more than twenty-four hours, the Frenchmen returned with the object of their mission, and Low punctually performed his promise by restoring the vessels.

"Having sailed for the Spanish-American settlements, the pirates descried two large ships about half way between Carthagena and Portobello, which proved to be the *Mermaid*, an English man-of-war, and a Guineaman. They approached in chase until discovering the man-of-war's great range of teeth, when they immediately put about and made the best of their way off. The man-of-war then commenced the pursuit and gained upon them apace, and I confess that my terrors were now equal to any that I had previously suffered; for I concluded that we should certainly be taken, and that I should not less be hanged for company's sake; so true are the words of

Solomon: 'A companion of fools shall be destroyed.' But the two pirate vessels finding themselves outsailed, separated, and Farrington Spriggs, who commanded the schooner in which I was stood in for the shore. The *Mermaid* observing the sloop with Low himself to be the larger of the two, crowded all sail, and continued gaining still more, indeed until her shot flew over; but one of the sloop's crew showed Low a shoal, which he could pass, and in the pursuit the man-of-war grounded. Thus the pirates escaped hanging on this occasion.

"Spriggs and one of his chosen companions dreading the consequences of being captured and brought to justice, laid their pistols beside them in the interval, and pledging a mutual oath in a bumper of liquor, swore if they saw no possibility of escape, to set foot to foot and blow out each other's brains. But standing toward the shore, they made Pickeroon Bay, and escaped the danger.

"Next we repaired to a small island called Utilla, about seven or eight leagues to leeward of the island of Roatan, in the Bay of Honduras, where the bottom of the schooner was cleaned. There were now twenty-two persons on board, and eight of us engaged in a plot to overpower our masters, and make our escape. Spriggs proposed sailing for New England, in quest of provisions and to increase his company; and we intended on approaching the coast, when the rest had indulged freely in liquor and fallen sound asleep, to secure them under the hatches, and then deliver ourselves up to government.

"Although our plot was carried on with all possible privacy, Spriggs had somehow or other got intelligence of it; and having fallen in with Low on the voyage, went on board his ship to make a furious declaration against us. But Low made little account of his information, otherwise it might have been fatal to most of our number. Spriggs, however, returned raging to the schooner, exclaiming that four of us should go forward to

be shot, and to me in particular he said: 'You dog Ashton, you deserve to be hanged up at the yardarm for designing to cut us off.' I replied that I had no intention of injuring any man on board; but I should be glad if they would allow me to go away quietly. At length this flame was quenched, and, through the goodness of God, I escaped destruction.

"Roatan harbor, as all about the Bay of Honduras, is full of small islands, which pass under the general name of Keys; and having got in here, Low, with some of his chief men, landed on a small island, which they called Port Royal Key. There they erected huts, and continued carousing, drinking, and firing, while the different vessels, of which they now had possession, were repairing.

"On Saturday, the 9th of March, 1723, the cooper, with six hands, in the long-boat, was going ashore for water; and coming alongside of the schooner, I requested to be of the party. Seeing him hesitate, I urged that I had never hitherto been ashore, and thought it hard to be so closely confined when every one besides had the liberty of landing as there was occasion. Low had before told me, on requesting to be sent away in some of the captured vessels which he dismissed that I should go home when he did, and swore that I should never previously set my foot on land. But now I considered if I could possibly once get on terra firma, though in ever such bad circumstances, I should account it a happy deliverance and resolved never to embark again.

"The cooper at length took me into the long-boat, while Low and his chief people were on a different island from Roatan, where the watering place lay; my only clothing was an Osnaburgh frock and trowsers, a milled cap, but neither shirt, shoes, stockings, nor anything else.

"When we first landed I was very active in assisting to get the casks out of the boat, and in rolling them to the watering place.

Then taking a hearty draught of water I strolled along the beach, picking up stones and shells; but on reaching the distance of a musket-shot from the party I began to withdraw toward the skirts of the woods. In answer to a question by the cooper of whither I was going I replied, 'for cocoanuts,' as some cocoa trees were just before me; and as soon as I was out of sight of my companions I took to my heels, running as fast as the thickness of the bushes and my naked feet would admit. Notwithstanding I had got a considerable way into the woods, I was still so near as to hear the voices of the party if they spoke loud, and I lay close in a thicket where I knew they could not find me.

"After my comrades had filled their casks and were about to depart, the cooper called on me to accompany them; however, I lay snug in the thicket, and gave him no answer, though his words were plain enough. At length, after hallooing loudly, I could hear them say to one another: 'The dog is lost in the woods, and cannot find the way out again'; then they hallooed once more, and cried 'He has run away and won't come to us'; and the cooper observed that had he known my intention he would not have brought me ashore. Satisfied of their inability to find me among the trees and bushes, the cooper at last, to show his kindness, exclaimed: 'If you do not come away presently, I shall go off and leave you alone.' Nothing, however, could induce me to discover myself; and my comrades seeing it vain to wait any longer, put off without me.

"Thus I was left on a desolate island, destitute of all help, and remote from the track of navigators; but compared with the state and society I had quitted, I considered the wilderness hospitable, and the solitude interesting.

"When I thought the whole was gone, I emerged from my thicket, and came down to a small run of water, about a mile from the place where our casks were filled, and there sat down

to observe the proceedings of the pirates. To my great joy in five days their vessels sailed, and I saw the schooner part from them to shape a different course.

"I then began to reflect on myself and my present condition; I was on an island which I had no means of leaving; I knew of no human being within many miles; my clothing was scanty, and it was impossible to procure a supply. I was altogether destitute of provision, nor could tell how my life was to be supported. This melancholy prospect drew a copious flood of tears from my eyes; but as it had pleased God to grant my wishes in being liberated from those whose occupation was devising mischief against their neighbors, I resolved to account every hardship light. Yet Low would never suffer his men to work on the Sabbath, which was more devoted to play; and I have even seen some of them sit down to read in a good book.

"In order to ascertain how I was to live in time to come, I began to range over the island, which proved ten or eleven leagues long, and lay in about sixteen degrees north latitude. But I soon found that my only companions would be the beasts of the earth, and fowls of the air; for there were no indications of any habitations on the island, though every now and then I found some shreds of earthen ware scattered in a lime walk, said by some to be the remains of Indians formerly dwelling here.

"The island was well watered, full of high hills and deep valleys. Numerous fruit trees, such as figs, vines, and cocoa-nuts are found in the latter; and I found a kind larger than an orange, oval-shaped of a brownish color without, and red within. Though many of these had fallen under the trees, I could not venture to take them until I saw the wild hogs feeding with safety, and then I found them very delicious fruit.

"Stores of provisions abounded here, though I could avail myself of nothing but the fruit; for I had no knife or iron

implement, either to cut up a tortoise on turning it, or weapons wherewith to kill animals; nor had I any means of making a fire to cook my capture, even if I were successful.

"To this place then was I confined during nine months, without seeing a human being. One day after another was lingered out, I know not how, void of occupation or amusement, except collecting food, rambling from hill to hill, and from island to island, and gazing on sky and water. Although my mind was occupied by many regrets, I had the reflection that I was lawfully employed when taken, so that I had no hand in bringing misery on myself; I was also comforted to think that I had the approbation and consent of my parents in going to sea, and trusted that it would please God, in his own time and manner, to provide for my return to my father's house. Therefore, I resolved to submit patiently to my misfortune.

"Sometime in November, 1723, I descried a small canoe approaching with a single man; but the sight excited little emotion. I kept my seat on the beach, thinking I could not expect a friend, and knowing that I had no enemy to fear, nor was I capable of resisting one. As the man approached, he betrayed many signs of surprise; he called me to him, and I told him he might safely venture ashore, for I was alone, and almost expiring. Coming close up, he knew not what to make of me; my garb and countenance seemed so singular, that he looked wild with astonishment. He started back a little, and surveyed me more thoroughly; but, recovering himself again, came forward, and, taking me by the hand, expressed his satisfaction at seeing me.

"This stranger proved to be a native of North Britain; he was well advanced in years, of a grave and venerable aspect, and of a reserved temper. His name I never knew, he did not disclose it, and I had not inquired during the period of our acquaintance. But he informed me he had lived twenty-two

years with the Spaniards who now threatened to burn him, though I know not for what crime; therefore he had fled hither as a sanctuary, bringing his dog, gun, and ammunition, as also a small quantity of pork, along with him. He designed spending the remainder of his days on the island, where he could support himself by hunting.

"I experienced much kindness from the stranger; he was always ready to perform any civil offices, and assist me in whatever he could, though he spoke little; and he gave me a share of his pork.

"On the third day after his arrival, he said he would make an excursion in his canoe among the neighboring islands, for the purpose of killing wild hogs and deer, and wished me to accompany him. Though my spirits were somewhat recruited by his society, the benefit of the fire, which I now enjoyed, and dressed provisions, my weakness and the soreness of my feet, precluded me; therefore he set out alone, saying he would return in a few hours. The sky was serene, and there was no prospect of any danger during a short excursion, seeing he had come nearly twelve leagues in safety in his canoe. But, when he had been absent about an hour, a violent gust of wind and rain arose, in which he probably perished, as I never heard of him more.

"Thus, after having the pleasure of a companion almost three days, I was as unexpectedly reduced to my former lonely state, as I had been relieved from it. Yet through the goodness of God, I was myself preserved from having been unable to accompany him; and I was left in better circumstances than those in which he had found me, for now I had about five pounds of pork, a knife, a bottle of gunpowder, tobacco, tongs and flint, by which means my life could be rendered more comfortable. I was enabled to have fire, extremely requisite at this time, being the rainy months of winter. I could cut up

a tortoise, and have a delicate broiled meal. Thus, by the help of the fire, and dressed provisions, through the blessings of God, I began to receive strength, though the soreness of my feet remained. But I had, besides, the advantage of being able now and then to catch a dish of cray fish, which, when roasted, proved good eating. To accomplish this I made up a small bundle of old broken sticks, nearly resembling pitch-pine, or candle-wood, and having lighted one end, waded with it in my hand, up to the waist in water. The cray fish, attracted by the light, would crawl to my feet and lie directly under it, when, by means of a forked stick, I could toss them ashore.

"Between two and three months after the time of losing my companion, I found a small canoe, while ranging along the shore. The sight of it revived my regret for his loss, for I judged that it had been his canoe; and, from being washed up here, a certain proof of his having been lost in the tempest. But on examining it more closely, I satisfied myself that it was one which I had never seen before. . . . . "

Three months after he lost his companion Philip Ashton found a small canoe which had drifted on the island beach. In this fragile craft he made his way to another island where he found a company of buccaneers who chased him through the woods with a volley of musketry. Re-embarking in his canoe he headed for the western end of this island and later reached Roatan where he lived alone for seven months longer. Here he was discovered and hospitably cared for by a number of Englishmen who had fled from the Bay of Honduras in fear of an attack by Spaniards. These refugees had planted crop and were living in what seemed to Philip Ashton as rare comfort. "Yet after all," he said of them, "they were bad society, and as to their common conversation there was but little difference between them and pirates."

At length this colony of outlaws was attacked and disbanded by a ship's company of pirates headed by Spriggs who had thrown off his allegiance to Low and set up in the business of piracy for himself with a ship of twenty-four guns and a sloop of twelve.

Ashton evaded their clutches and with one Symonds, who had also fled from the attack of Spriggs, made his way from one island to another until he was fortunate enough to find a fleet of English merchant vessels under convoy of the *Diamond* man-of-war bound for Jamaica. They touched at one of these islands near the Bay of Honduras to fill their water casks and it was there that Ashton found the Salem brigantine commanded by Captain Dove.

The journal says in conclusion: "Captain Dove not only treated me with great civility and engaged to give me a passage home but took me into pay, having lost a seaman whose place he wanted me to supply.

"We sailed along with the *Diamond*, which was bound for Jamaica, in the latter end of March, 1725, and kept company until the first of April. By the providence of Heaven we passed safely through the Gulf of Florida, and reached Salem Harbor on the first of May, two years, ten months and fifteen days after I was first taken by pirates; and two years, and two months, after making my escape from them on Roatan island. That same evening I went to my father's house, where I was received as one risen from the dead."

# CHAPTER IV

## THE PRIVATEERSMEN OF '76

PRIVATEERING has ceased to be a factor in civilized warfare. The swift commerce destroyer as an arm of the naval service has taken the place of the private armed ship which roamed the seas for its own profit as well for its country's cause. To-day the United States has a navy prepared both to defend its own merchant vessels, what few there are, and to menace the trade of a hostile nation on the high seas.

When the War of the Revolution began, however, Britannia ruled the seas, and the naval force of the Colonies was pitifully feeble. In 1776 there were only thirty-one Continental cruisers of all classes in commission and this list was steadily diminished by the ill-fortunes of war until in 1782 only seven ships flew the American flag, which had been all but swept from the ocean. During the war these ships captured one hundred and ninety-six of the enemy's craft.

On the other hand, there were already one hundred and thirty-six privateers at sea by the end of the year 1776, and their number increased until in 1781 there were four hundred and forty-nine of these private commerce destroyers in commission. This force took no fewer than eight hundred British vessels and made prisoners of twelve thousand British seamen during the war. The privateersmen dealt British maritime prestige the deadliest blow in history. It had been an undreamt of danger that the American Colonies should humble that flag which "had waved over every sea and triumphed over every

rival," until even the English and Irish Channels were not safe for British ships to traverse. The preface of the Sailor's Vade-Mecum, edition of 1744, contained the following lofty doctrine which all good Englishmen believed, and which was destined to be shattered by a contemptible handful of seafaring rebels:

"That the Monarchs of GREAT BRITAIN have a peculiar and Sovereign Authority upon the Ocean, is a Right so Ancient and Undeniable that it never was publicly disputed, but by HUGO GROTIUS in his MARE LIBERUM, published in the Year 1636, in Favour of the DUTCH Fishery upon our Coasts; which Book was fully Controverted by Mr. Selden's MARE CLAUSUM, wherein he proves this Sovereignty from the Laws of God and of Nature, besides an uninterrupted Fruition of it for so many Ages past as that its Beginning cannot be traced out."

When the War of 1812 was threatening, *The London Statesman* paid this unwilling tribute to the prowess of these Yankee privateersmen of the Revolution:

"Every one must recollect what they did in the latter part of the American War. The books at Lloyds will recount it, and the rate of assurances at that time will clearly prove what their diminutive strength was able to effect in the face of our navy, and that when nearly one hundred pennants were flying on their coast. Were we able to prevent their going in and out, or stop them from taking our trade and our store-ships, even in size of our own garrisons? Besides, were they not in the English and Irish Channels picking up our homeward bound trade, sending their prizes into French and Spanish ports to the great terror and annoyance of our merchants and shipowners?

"These are facts which can be traced to a period when America was in her infancy, without ships, without money, and at a time when our navy was not much less in strength than at present."

At the beginning of the Revolution, Salem was sending its boys to fill the forecastles of the vessels built in its own yards and commanded by its own shipmasters. Hard by were the towns of Beverly and Marblehead whose townsmen also won their hardy livelihood on the fishing banks and along distant and perilous trading routes. When British squadrons and cruisers began to drive them ashore to starve in idleness, these splendid seamen turned their vessels into privateers and rushed them to sea like flights of hawks. It was a matter of months only before they had made a jest of the boastful lines which had long adorned the columns of the *Naval Chronicle* of London:

"The sea and waves are Britain's broad domain
And not a sail but by permission spreads."

This race of seafarers had been drilled to handle cannon and muskets. Every merchantman that sailed for Europe or the West Indies carried her battery of six pounders, and hundreds of Salem men and boys could tell you stories of running fights and escapes from French and Spanish freebooters and swarming pirates. Commerce on the high seas was not a peaceful pursuit. The merchantman was equipped to become a privateer by shipping a few more guns and signing on a stronger company. The conditions of the times which had made these seamen able to fight as shrewdly as they traded may be perceived from the following extracts from the "Seaman's Vade-Mecum," as they appear in the rare editions published both in 1744 and 1780: "*Shewing how to prepare a Merchant Ship for a close fight by disposing their Bulk-heads, Leaves, Coamings, Look-holes,* etc."

"If the Bulkhead of the Great Cabbin be well fortified it may be of singular Use; for though the Enemy may force the Steerage, yet when they unexpectedly meet with another Barricade and from thence a warm Reception by the Small Arms, they will be thrown into great Confusion, and a Cannon ready

loaded with Case-shot will do great Execution; but if this should not altogether answer the Purpose, it will oblige the Enemy to pay the dearer for their Conquest. For the Steerage may hold out the longer, and the Men will be the bolder in defending it, knowing that they have a place to retire into, and when there they may Capitulate for Good Quarter at the last Extremity. . . ."

". . . It has been objected that Scuttles (especially that out of the Forecastle) are Encouragements for Cowardice; that having no such Convenience, the Men are more resolute, because they must fight, die or be taken. Now if they must fight or die, it is highly unreasonable and as cruel to have Men to be cut to Pieces when they are able to defend their Posts no longer, and in this Case the Fate of the Hero and the Coward is alike; and if it is to fight or be taken, the Gallant will hold out to the last while the Coward (if the danger runs high), surrenders as soon as Quarter is offered; and now if there be a Scuttle, the Menace of the Enemy will make the less Impression on their Minds, and they will stand out the longer, when they know they can retire from the Fury of the Enemy in case they force their Quarters. In short, it will be as great a blemish in the Commander's Politics to leave Cowards without a Scuttle as it will be Ingratitude to have Gallant Men to be cut to Pieces."

### "*How to Make a Sally*

"Having (by a vigorous defence) repulsed the Enemy from your Bulkheads, and cutting up your Deck, it may be necessary to make a SALLY to compleat your Victory; but by the Way, the young MASTER must use great caution before he SALLY out, lest he be drawn into some Strategem to his Ruin; therefore for a Ship of but few hands it is not a Mark of Cowardice to keep the Close-Quarters so long as the Enemy is on board; and if his Men retire out of your Ship, fire into him through

your Look-holes and Ports till he calls for QUARTER. And if it should ever come to that, you must proceed Warily (unless you out Number him in Men) and send but a few of your Hands into his Ship while the others are ready with all their Small-arms and Cannon charged; and if they submit patiently disarm and put them down below, where there is no POWDER or WEAPONS; but plunder not, lest your men quarrel about Trifles or be too intent in searching for Money, and thereby give the Enemy an opportunity to destroy you; and if you take the Prize (when you come into an harbor) let everything be equally shared among the Men, the Master only reserving to himself the Affections of his Men by his Generosity which with the Honour of the Victory to a brave Mind is equivalent to all the rest. . . ."

"It is presumed that the Sally will be most Advantageous if made out of the Round-house, because having cleared the Poop, you will have no Enemy at your back; wherefore let all but two or more, according to your Number, step up into the Round-house, bringing with them all or most of the Musquets and Pistols there, leaving only the Blunderbusses. Let all the Small Arms in the Quarters be charged, and the Cannon that flank the Decks and out of the Bulk-heads, traversing those in the Round-house, pointing towards the mizzen-mast to gaul the Enemy in case of a retreat. All things being thus prepared, let a Powder-chest be sprung upon the Poop, and four Hand Granadoes tost out of the Ports, filled with Flower and fuzees of a long duration, then let the Door be opened, and in the Confusion make your Sally at once, half advancing forward and the other facing about to clear the Poop; when this is done, let them have an eye to the Chains. At the Round-house Door let two men be left to stand by the Port-cullis, each having a brace of Pistols to secure a Retreat; let then those in the Forecastle never shoot right aft, after the Sally is made, unless

parallel with the Main Deck. The rest must be left to Judgment."

Try to imagine, if you please, advice of such tenor as this compiled for the use of the captains of the transatlantic liners or cargo "tramps" of to-day, and you will be able to comprehend in some slight measure how vast has been the change in the conditions of the business of the sea, and what hazards our American forefathers faced to win their bread on quarterdeck and in forecastle. Nor were such desperate engagements as are outlined in this ancient "Seaman's Vade-Mecum" at all infrequent. "Round-houses" and "great cabbins" were defended with "musquets," "javalins," "Half-pikes" and cutlasses, and "hand-granadoes" in many a hand-to-hand conflict with sea raiders before the crew of the bluff-blowed, high-popped Yankee West Indiaman had to "beat off the boarders" or make a dashing "Sally" or "capitulate for Good Quarter at the last Extremity."

Of such, then, were the privateersmen who flocked down the wharves and among the tavern "rendezvous" of Salem as soon as the owners of the waiting vessels had obtained their commissions from the Continental Congress, and issued the call for volunteers. Mingled with the hardy seamen who had learned their trade in Salem vessels were the sons of wealthy shipping merchants of the best blood of the town and county who embarked as "gentlemen volunteers," eager for glory and plunder, and a chance to avenge the wrongs they and their kinfolk had suffered under British trade laws and at the hands of British press gangs.

The foregoing extracts from the "Seaman's Vade-Mecum" show how singularly fixed the language of the sea has remained through the greater part of two centuries. With a few slight differences, the terms in use then are commonly employed to-day. It is therefore probable that if you could have been on old

Derby Wharf in the year of 1776, the talk of the busy, sun-browned men and boys around you would have sounded by no means archaic. The wharf still stretches a long arm into the harbor and its tumbling warehouses, timbered with great hewn beams, were standing during the Revolution. Then they were filled with cannon, small arms, rigging and ships' stores as fast as they could be hauled hither. Fancy needs only to picture this land-locked harbor alive with square-rigged vessels, tall sloops and topsail schooners, their sides checkered with gun-ports, to bring to life the Salem of the privateersman of one hundred and forty years ago.

Shipmasters had no sooner signaled their homecoming with deep freights of logwood, molasses or sugar than they received orders to discharge with all speed and clear their decks for mounting batteries and slinging the hammocks of a hundred waiting privateersmen. The guns and men once aboard, the crews were drilling night and day while they waited the chance to slip to sea. Their armament included carronades, "Long Toms" and "long six" or "long nine" pounders, sufficient muskets, blunderbusses, pistols, cutlasses, tomahawks, boarding pikes, hand grenades, round shot, grape, canister, and double-headed shot.

When larger vessels were not available tiny sloops with twenty or thirty men and boys mounted one or two old guns and put to sea to "capture a Britisher" and very likely be taken themselves by the first English ship of war that sighted them. The prize money was counted before it was caught, and seamen made a business of selling their shares in advance, preferring the bird in the bush, as shown by the following bill of sale:

"Beverly, ye 7th, 1776.

"Know all men by these presents, that I the subscriber, in consideration of the sum of sixteen dollars to me in hand paid

by Mr. John Waters, in part for ½ share of all the Prizes that may be taken during the cruize of the Privateer Sloop called the *Revenge*, whereof Benjamin Dean is commissioned Commander, and for the further consideration of twenty-four dollars more to be paid at the end of the whole cruize of the said Sloop; and these certify that I the subscriber have sold, bargained and conveyed unto the said John Waters, or his order, the one half share of my whole share of all the prizes that may be taken during the whole cruize of said Sloop. Witness my hand,

"P. H. Brockhorn."

An endorsement on the back of the document records that Mr. Waters received the sum of twenty pounds for "parte of the within agreement," which return reaped him a handsome profit on the speculation. Many similar agreements are preserved to indicate that Salem merchants plunged heavily on the risks of privateering by buying seamens' shares for cash. The articles of agreement under which these Salem privateers of the Revolution made their warlike cruises belong with a vanished age of sea life. These documents were, in the main, similar to the following:

"*Articles of Agreement*

"Concluded at Salem this Seventh day of May, 1781, between the owners of the Privateer Ship *Rover*, commanded by James Barr, now fixing in this port for a cruise of four months against the Enemies of the United States of America, on the first part and the officers and seamen belonging to said Ship *Rover* on the other part as follows, *viz.*:

"Article 1st. The owners agree to fix with all expedition said Ship for sea, and cause her to be mounted with Twenty Guns, four Pounders, with a sufficiency of ammunition of all kinds and good provisions for one Hundred men for four months' cruise, also to procure an apparatus for amputating,

and such a Box of medicine as shall be thought necessary by the Surgeon.

"Article 2nd. The Officers and Seamen Shall be entitled to one half of all the prizes captured by Said Ship after the cost of condemning, etc., is deducted from the whole.

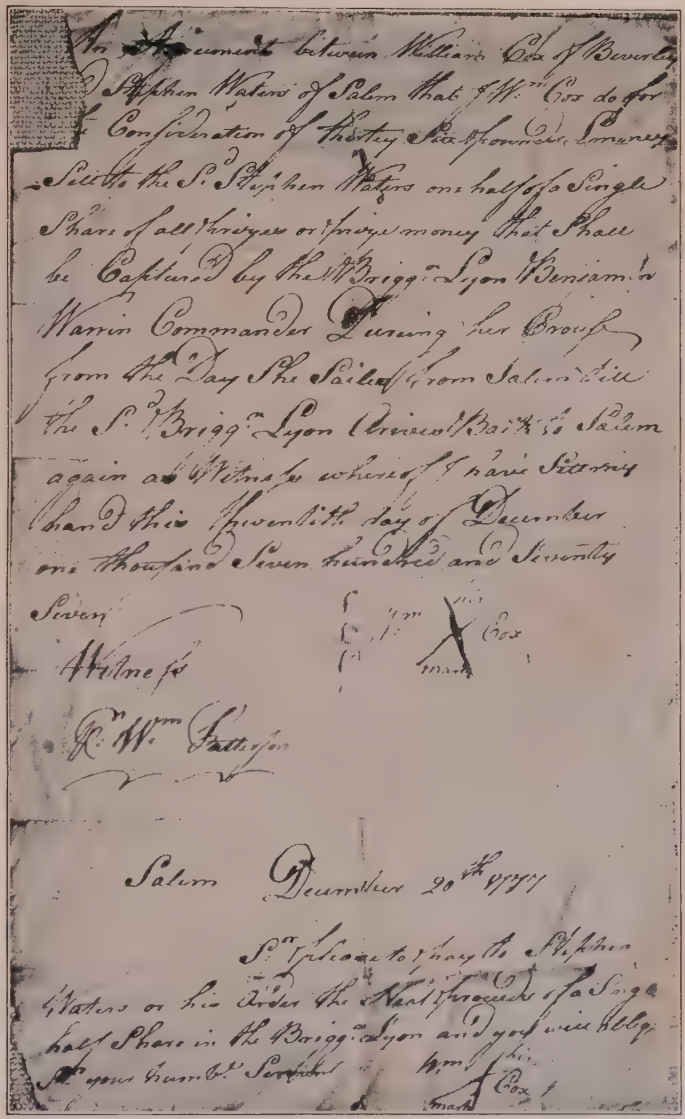
"Article 3rd. The Officers and Seamen agree that they will to the utmost of their abilities discharge the duty of Officers and Seamen, according to their respective Stations on board Said Ship, her boats and Prizes, by her taken, and the Officers and Seamen further agree that if any Officer or Private shall in time of any engagement with any Vessell abandon his Post on board said Ship or any of her boats or Prizes by her taken, or disobey the commands of the Captain or any Superior Officer, that said Officer or Seaman, if adjudged guilty by three Officers, the Captain being one, shall forfeit all right to any Prize or Prizes by her taken.

"Article 4th. The Officers and Seamen further agree that if any Officer shall in time of any engagement or at any other time behave unworthy of the Station that he holds on board said Ship, it shall be in the power of three officers, the captain being one, to displace said Officer, and appoint any one they may see fit in his place. That if any Officer belonging to said Ship shall behave in an unbecoming character of an officer and gentleman, he shall be dismissed and forfeit his share of the cruise.

"Article 5th. The owners, officers and Seamen agree that if any one shall first discover a sail which shall prove to be a Prize, he shall be entitled to Five hundred Dollars.

"Article 6th. Any one who shall first board any Vessell in time of an engagement, which shall prove a Prize, Shall be entitled to one thousand Dollars and the best firelock on board said Vessell, officers' prizes being excepted.

"Article 7th. If any officer or Seaman shall at the time of



Agreement by which a Revolutionary privateer seaman sold his share of the booty in advance of his cruise

an Engagement loose a leg or an arm he shall be entitled to Four Thousand Dollars; if any officer or Seaman shall loose an Eye in time of an Engagement, he shall receive the Sum of Two thousand Dollars; if any officer shall loose a joint he shall be entitled to one thousand Dollars, the same to be paid from the whole amount of prizes taken by said Ship.

"Article 8th. That no Prize master or man, that shall be put on board any Prize whatever and arrive at any port whatever, Shall be entitled to his share or shares, except he remain to discharge the Prize, or he or they are discharged by the agent of said Ship, except the Privateer is arrived before the Prize.

"Article 9th. That for the Preservation of Good order on board said Ship, no man to quit or go out of her, on board of any other Vessell without having obtained leave from the commanding officer on board.

"Article 10th. That if any person Shall count to his own use any part of the Prize or Prizes or be found pilfering any money or goods, and be convicted thereof, he shall forfeit his Share of Prize money to the Ship and Company.

"That if any person shall be found a Ringleader of a meeting or cause any disturbance on board, refuse to obey the command of the Captain, or any officer or behave with Cowardice, or get drunk in time of action, he shall forfeit his or their Share of or Shares to the rest of the Ship's Company."

So immensely popular was the privateering service among the men and youth of Salem and nearby ports that the naval vessels of the regular service were hard put to enlist their crews. When the fifes and drums sounded through the narrow streets with a strapping privateersman in the van as a recruiting officer, he had no trouble in collecting a crowd ready to listen to his persuasive arguments whose burden was prize money and glory. More than once a ship's company a hundred strong

was enrolled and ready to go on board by sunset of the day the call for volunteers was made. Trembling mothers and weeping wives could not hold back these sailors of theirs, and as for the sweethearts they could only sit at home and hope that Seth or Jack would come home a hero with his pockets lined with gold instead of finding his fate in a burial at sea, or behind the walls of a British prison.

It was customary for the owners of the privateer to pay the cost of the "rendezvous," which assembling of the ship's company before sailing was held in the "Blue Anchor," or some other sailors' tavern down by the busy harbor. That the "rendezvous" was not a scene of sadness and that the privateersmen were wont to put to sea with no dust in their throats may be gathered from the following tavern bill of 1781:

Dr.

Captain George Williams, Agent Privateer Brig *Sturdy Beggar* to Jonathan Archer, Jr.

To Rendezvous Bill as follows:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1781 Aug. | 8–12 | to 11 Bowls punch at 3–1 Bowl tod. at 1–3 | 1.14.3 |
| | 14 | to 8 bowls punch 1 bowl chery tod. at 1–9 | 1. 5.9 |
| | 20 | to 6 bowls punch 8 Bowls Chery tod. 2 Grog | 1.14.6 |
| | 22 | to 7 bowls punch 7 bowls Chery tod. | 1.13.3 |
| | 30 | to 14 Bowls punch 8 bowls Chery tod. and 2½ Grog | 2.19.1 |
| Sept. | 4 | to 7 Bowls punch 10 bowls chery 3 Grog | 2.13.9 |
| | 6 | to 10 bowls punch 1 bowl chery tod. 2 grog | 1.14.3 |
| | 10 | to 4½ bowls punch | 1. 2.6 |

There were stout heads as well as stout hearts in New England during those gallant days and it is safe to say that the crew of the *Sturdy Beggar* was little the worse for wear after the farewell rounds of punch, grog and "chery tod." at the rendezvous ruled by mine host, Jonathan Archer. It was to be charged against privateering that it drew away from the naval service the best class of recruits.

An eye witness, Ebenezer Fox of Roxbury, wrote this account of the putting an armed State ship into commission in 1780:

"The coast was lined with British cruisers which had almost annihilated our commerce. The State of Massachusetts judged it expedient to build a gun vessel, rated as a twenty-gun ship, named *Protector*,* commanded by Captain John Foster Williams, to be fitted as soon as possible and sent to sea. A rendezvous was established for recruits at the head of Hancock's Wharf (Boston) where the National flag, then bearing thirteen stars and stripes, was hoisted.

"All means were resorted to which ingenuity could devise to induce men to enlist. A recruiting officer bearing a flag and attended by a band of martial music paraded the streets, to excite a thirst for glory and a spirit of military ambition. The recruiting officer possessed the qualifications requisite to make the service alluring, especially to the young. He was a jovial, good-natured fellow, of ready wit and much broad humor. Crowds followed in his wake, and he occasionally stopped at the corners to harangue the multitude in order to excite their patriotism. When he espied any large boys among the idle crowd crowded around him he would attract their attention by singing in a comical manner:

"'All you that have bad Masters,
And cannot get your due,
Come, come, my brave boys
And join our ship's crew.'

"Shouting and huzzaing would follow and some join the ranks. My excitable feelings were aroused. I repaired to the rendezvous, signed the ship's papers, mounted a cockade and was, in my own estimation, already half a sailor.

"The recruiting business went on slowly, however; but at

* See Captain Luther Little's story of the *Protector's* fight with the *Admiral Duff*. Chapter VI, Page 109.

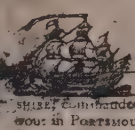
length upward of 300 men were carried, dragged and driven on board; of all ages, kinds and descriptions; in all the various stages of intoxication from that of sober tipsiness to beastly drunkenness; with the uproar and clamor that may be more easily imagined than described. Such a motley group has never been seen since Falstaff's ragged regiment paraded the streets of Coventry."

When Captain John Paul Jones, however, was fitting out the *Ranger* in Portsmouth harbor in the spring of 1777, many a Salem lad forsook privateering to follow the fortunes of this dashing commander in the service of their country. On Salem tavern doors and in front of the town hall was posted the following "broadside," adorned with a wood cut of a full-rigged fighting ship. It was a call that appealed to the spirit of the place, and it echoes with thrilling effect, even as one reads it a hundred and forty years after its proclamation:

"Great
Encouragement
For Seamen

"All Gentlemen Seamen and able-bodied Landsmen who have a Mind to distinguish themselves in the Glorious Cause of their Country and make their Fortunes, an opportunity now offers on board the Ship Ranger of Twenty Guns (for France) now laying in Portsmouth in the State of New Hampshire, Commanded by John Paul Jones, Esq.: let them repair to the Ship's Rendezvous in Portsmouth, or at the Sign of Commodore Manley in Salem, where they will be kindly entertained, and receive the greatest Encouragement. The Ship Ranger in the Opinion of every Person who has seen her is looked upon to be one of the best Cruizers in America. She will be always able to fight her Guns under a most excellent Cover; and no Vessel yet built was ever calculated for sailing faster.

# GREAT ENCOURAGEMENT FOR SEAMEN.



ALL GENTLEMEN SEAMEN and able-bodied LANDSMEN who have a Mind to diſtinguiſh themſelves in the GLORIOUS CAUSE of their COUNTRY, and make their Fortunes, an Opportunity now offers to board the Ship RANGER, of Twenty Guns, (for FRANCE) now laying in PORTSMOUTH, in the State of NEW-HAMPSHIRE, commanded by JOHN PAUL JONES, Eſq; let them repair to the Ship's Rendezvous in PORTSMOUTH, or at the Sign of Commodore MANLEY, in SALEM, where they will be kindly entertained, and receive the greateſt Encouragement.—The Ship RANGER, in the Opinion of every Perſon who has ſeen her is looked upon to be one of the beſt Cruizers in AMERICA.—She will be always able to Fight her Guns under almoſt excellent Cover; and no Veſſel yet built was ever calculated for ſailing faſter, and making good Weather.

Any GENTLEMEN VOLUNTEERS who have a Mind to take an agreable Voyage in this pleaſant Seaſon of the Year, may, by entering on board the above Ship RANGER, meet with every Civility they can poſſibly expect, and for a further Encouragement depend on the firſt Opportunity being embraced to reward each one agreable to his Merit.

All reaſonable Travelling Expences will be allowed, and the Advance-Money be paid on their Appearance on Board.

IN CONGRESS, MARCH 29, 1777.

RESOLVED,

THAT the MARINE COMMITTEE be authoriſed to advance to every able Seaman, that enters into the CONTINENTAL SERVICE, any Sum not exceeding FORTY DOLLARS, and to every ordinary Seaman or Landſman, any Sum not exceeding TWENTY DOLLARS, to be deducted from their future Prize-Money.

By Order of CONGRESS,

JOHN HANCOCK, PRESIDENT.

DANVERS: Printed by E. ROBBINS, at the Houſe late the Bell-Tavern.

Proclamation posted in Salem during the Revolution calling for volunteers aboard Paul Jones' *Ranger*

"Any GENTLEMEN VOLUNTEERS who have a Mind to take an agreable Voyage in this pleasant Season of the Year may, by entering on board the above Ship RANGER meet with every Civility they can possibly expect, and for a further Encouragement depend on the first Opportunity being embraced to reward each one Agreable to his MERIT. All reasonable Travelling Expences will be allowed, and the Advance Money be paid on their Appearance on Board.

"In CONGRESS, March 29, 1777.

"Resolved,

"That the MARINE COMMITTEE be authorized to advance to every able Seaman that enters into the CONTINENTAL SERVICE, any Sum not exceeding FORTY DOLLARS, and to every ordinary Seaman or Landsman any Sum not exceeding TWENTY DOLLARS, to be deducted from their future Prize Money.

"By Order of Congress,

"JOHN HANCOCK, President."

It was of this cruise that Yankee seamen the world over were singing in later years the song of "Paul Jones and the *Ranger*," which describes her escape from a British battleship and four consorts:

"'Tis of the gallant Yankee ship
That flew the Stripes and Stars,
And the whistling wind from the west nor west
Blew through her pitch pine spars.
With her starboard tacks aboard, my boys.
She hung upon the gale,
On an autumn night we raised the light
On the old Head of Kinsale.

* * *

"Up spake our noble captain then,
As a shot ahead of us past;
'Haul snug your flowing courses,
Lay your topsail to the mast.'

Those Englishmen gave three loud hurrahs
From the deck of their covered ark,
And we answered back by a solid broadside
From the decks of our patriot bark.

'Out booms, out booms,' our skipper cried,
'Out booms and give her sheet,'
And the swiftest keel that ever was launched
Shot ahead of the British fleet.
And amidst a thundering shower of shot,
With stern sails hoisted away,
Down the North Channel Paul Jones did steer
Just at the break of day."

The privateersmen were as ready to fight, if needs be, as were these seamen that chose to sail with Paul Jones in the Continental service. All British merchantmen carried guns and heavy crews to man them, and while many of them thought it wisdom to strike their colors to a heavily armed privateer without a show of resistance, the "packet ships" and Indiamen were capable of desperate actions. The American privateers ran the gauntlet also of the king's ships which swarmed in our waters, and they met and engaged both these and British privateers as formidable as themselves. The notable sea fights of this kind are sometimes best told in the words of the men who fought them. Captain David Ropes, of an old Salem seafaring family, was killed in a privateer action which was described in the following letter written by his lieutenant, later Captain William Gray. Their vessel was the private armed ship *Jack* of Salem, carrying twelve guns and sixty men.

"Salem, June 12, 1782.

"On the 28th of May, cruising near Halifax, saw a brig standing in for the land; at 7 P.M. discovered her to have a copper bottom, sixteen guns and full of men; at half-past nine o'clock she came alongside when a close action commenced.

"It was our misfortune to have our worthy commander, Captain Ropes, mortally wounded at the first broadside. I was slightly wounded at the same time in my right hand and head, but not so as to disable me from duty. The action was maintained on both sides close, severe, and without intermission for upwards of two hours, in which time we had seven killed, several wounded and several abandoned their quarters. Our rigging was so destroyed that not having command of our yards, the *Jack* fell with her larboard bow foul of the brig's starboard quarter, when the enemy made an attempt to board us, but they were repulsed by a very small number compared with them. We were engaged in this position about a quarter of an hour, in which time I received a wound by a bayonet fixed on a musket which was hove with such force, as entering my thigh close to the bone, entered the carriage of a bow gun where I was fastened, and it was out of my power to get clear until assisted by one of the prize masters.

"We then fell round and came without broadsides to each other, when we resumed the action with powder and balls; but our match rope, excepting some which was unfit for use, being all expended, and being to leeward, we bore away making a running fight. The brig being far superior to us in number of men, was able to get soon repaired, and completely ready to renew the action. She had constantly kept up a chasing fire, for we had not been out of reach of her musketry. She was close alongside of us again, with fifty picked men for boarding.

"I therefore called Mr. Glover and the rest together and found we had but ten men on deck. I had been repeatedly desired to strike, but I mentioned the suffering of the prison ship, and made use of every other argument in my power for continuing the engagement. All the foreigners, however, deserted their quarters at every opportunity. At 2 o'clock P.M. I had the inexpressible mortification to deliver up the vessel.

"I was told, on enquiry, that we were taken by the *Observer*, a sloop of war belonging to the navy, commanded by Captain Grymes. She was formerly the *Amsterdam*, and owned in Boston; that she was calculated for sixteen guns, but then had but twelve on board; that the *Blonde* frigate, being cast away on Seal Island, the captain, officers, and men had been taken off by Captain Adams, in a sloop belonging to Salem, and Captain Stoddart in a schooner belonging to Boston, and by them landed on the main. Most of the officers and men having reached Halifax were by the Governor sent on board the brig in order to come out and convoy in the captain of a frigate who was, with some of his men, coming to Halifax in a shallop, and that the afternoon before the action, he and some others were taken on board the brig, which increased his number to one hundred and seventy-five men.

"Captain Ropes died at 4 o'clock P.M. on the day we were taken, after making his will with the greatest calmness and composure."

The Nova Scotia *Gazette* of June 4, 1782, contained this letter as a sequel of an incident mentioned by Lieutenant Gray in the foregoing account of the action:

"To the Printer, Sir: In justice to humanity, I and all my officers and Ship's company of His Majesty's late Ship *Blonde* by the commanders of the American Private Ships of War, the *Lively* and the *Scammel* (Captains Adams and Stoddart), have the pleasure to inform the Public that they not only readily received us on board their Vessels and carried us to Cape Race, but cheerfully Supplied us with Provisions till we landed at Yarmouth, when on my releasing all my Prisoners, sixty-four in number, and giving them a Passport to secure them from our Cruisers in Boston Bay, they generously gave me the Same

to prevent our being made Prisoners or plundered by any of their Privateers we might chance to meet on our Passage to Halifax.

"For the relief and comfort they so kindly affoarded us in our common Sufferings and Distress, we must arduantly hope that if any of their Privateers should happen to fall into the hands of our Ships of War, that they will treat them with the utmost lenity, and give them every endulgance in their Power and not look upon them (Promiscuously) in the Light of American Prisoners, Captain Adams especially, to whom I am indebted more particularly obliged, as will be seen by his letters herewith published. My warmest thanks are also due to Captain Tuck of the *Blonde's* Prize Ship *Lion* (Letter of Marque of Beverly) and to all his officers and men for their generous and indefatigable endeavors to keep the Ship from Sinking (night and day at the Pumps) till all but one got off her and by the blessing of God saved our Lives.

"You will please to publish this in your next Paper, . . . which will oblige your humble Servant,

"Edward Thornbrough,
"Commander of H. M. late Ship *Blonde.*"

A very human side of warfare is shown in this correspondence, coupled with the brutal inconsistency of war, for after their rescue the officers and men of the *Blonde*, who felt such sincere friendship and gratitude toward the crews of two Yankee privateers, had helped to spread death and destruction aboard the luckless *Jack*.

The log books of the Revolutionary privateersmen out of Salem are so many fragments of history, as it was written day by day, and flavored with the strong and vivid personalities of the men who sailed and fought and sweated and swore without thought of romance in their adventurous calling. There is the

log of the privateer schooner *Scorpion*, for example, during a cruise made in 1778. Her master has so far sailed a bootless voyage when he penned this quaint entry:

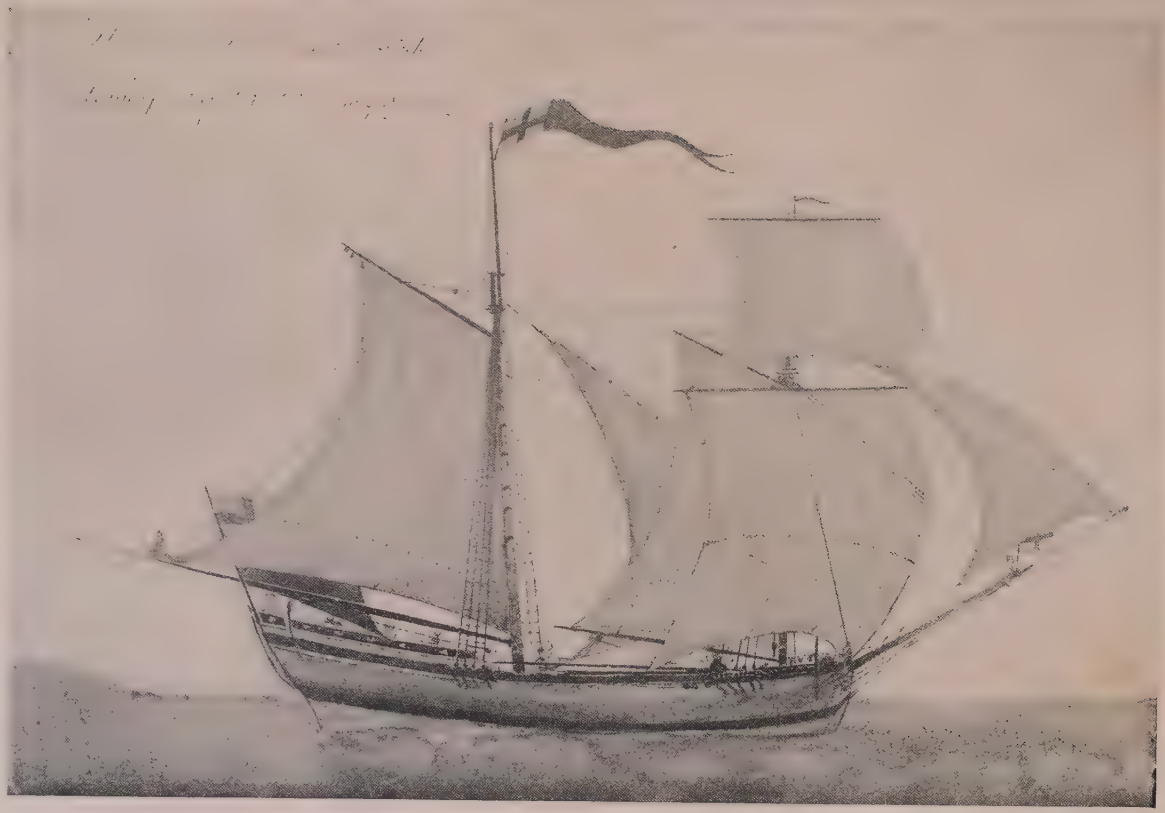
"This Book was Maid in the Lattd. of 24:30 North and in the Longtd. of 54:00 West at the Saim time having Contryary Winds for Several Days which Makes me fret a'most Wicked. Daly I praye there Maye be Change such as I Want. This Book I Maid to Keep the Accounts of my Voyage but God Knoes beste When that Will be, for I am at this Time very Empasente* but I hope there soon be a Change to Ease my trobled Mind. Which is my Earneste Desire and of my people. ********** (illegible) is this day taken with the palsy, but I hope will soon gete beter. On this Day I was Chaced by two Ships of War which I tuck to be Enemies, but comeing in thick Weather I have Lost Site of them and so conclude myself Escapt which is a small Good Fortune in the Midste of my Discouragementes."

A note of Homeric mirth echoes from the past of a hundred and forty years ago in the "Journal of a Cruising Voyage in the Letter of Marque Schooner *Success*, commanded by Captain Philip Thrash, Commencing 4th Oct. 1778." Captain Thrash, a lusty and formidable name by the way, filled one page after another of his log with rather humdrum routine entries; how he took in and made sail and gave chase and drilled his crew at the guns, etc. At length the reader comes to the following remarks. They stand without other comment or explanation, and leave one with a desire to know more:

"At 1–2 past 8 discovered a Sail ahead, tacked ship. At 9 tacked ship and past just to Leeward of the sail which appeared to be a damn'd Comical Boat, by G—d."

What was it about this strange sail overhauled in midocean

*(impatient)



Schooner *Baltic* (1765), type of the smaller vessels in which the Revolutionary privateersmen put to sea. Paintings of American ships as old as this are exceedingly rare

by Captain Philip Thrash that should have so stirred his rude sense of humor? Why did she strike him as so "damn'd Comical"? They met and went their way and the "Comical" craft dropped hull down and vanished in a waste of blue water and so passed forever from our ken. But I for one would give much to know why she aroused a burst of gusty laughter along the low rail of the letter-of-marque schooner *Success.*

# CHAPTER V

## JONATHAN HARADEN, PRIVATEERSMAN

## (1776–1782)

THE United States navy, with its wealth of splendid tradition, has few more commanding figures than Captain Jonathan Haraden, the foremost fighting privateersman of Salem during the Revolution, and one of the ablest men that fought in that war, afloat or ashore. His deeds are well-nigh forgotten by his countrymen, yet he captured one thousand cannon in British ships and counted his prizes by the score.

Jonathan Haraden was born in Gloucester, but as a boy was employed by George Cabot of Salem and made his home there for the remainder of his life. He followed the sea from his early youth, and had risen to a command in the merchant service when the Revolution began. The Massachusetts Colony placed two small vessels in commission as State vessels of war, and aboard one of these, the *Tyrannicide*, Jonathan Haraden was appointed lieutenant. On her first cruise, very early in the war, she fought a king's cutter from Halifax for New York. The British craft carried a much heavier crew than the *Tyrannicide*, but the Yankee seamen took her after a brisk engagement in which their gunnery was notably destructive.

Soon after this, Haraden was promoted to the command of this audacious sloop of the formidable name, but he desired greater freedom of action. A Salem merchant ship, the *General Pickering*, of 180 tons, was fitting out as a letter of marque, and

Haraden was offered the command. With a cargo of sugar, fourteen six-pounders and forty-five men and boys he sailed for Bilboa in the spring of 1780. This port of Spain was a popular rendezvous for American privateers, where they were close to the British trade routes. During the voyage across, before his crew had been hammered into shape, Haraden was attacked by a British cutter of twenty guns, but managed to beat her off and proceeded on his way after a two hours' running fight.

He was a man of superb coolness and audacity and he showed these qualities to advantage while tacking into the Bay of Biscay. At nightfall he sighted a British privateer, the *Golden Eagle*, considerably larger than the *Pickering*, and carrying at least eight more guns. Instead of crowding on sail and shifting his course to avoid her, he set after her in the darkness and steered alongside. Before the enemy could decide whether to fight or run away Haraden was roaring through his speaking trumpet:

"What ship is this? An American frigate, Sir. Strike, or I'll sink you with a broadside."

The British privateer skipper was bewildered by this startling summons and surrendered without firing a shot. A prize-master was put on board and at daylight both vessels laid their course for Bilboa. As they drew near the harbor, a sail was sighted making out from the land. All strange sails were under suspicion in that era of sea life, and Captain Haraden made ready to clear his ship for action even before the English captain, taken out of the prize, cheerfully carried him word that he knew the stranger to be the *Achilles*, a powerful and successful privateer hailing from London, carrying more than forty guns and at least a hundred and fifty men. The description might have been that of a formidable sloop of war rather than a privateer, and the British skipper was at no pains to hide his satisfaction at the plight of the Yankee with her fourteen six-pounders and her handful of men.

At the sight of an enemy thrice his fighting strength, Captain Haraden told the English captain:

"Be that as it may, and you seem sure of your information, I sha'n't run away from her."

The wind so held that the *Achilles* first bore down upon the prize of the *Pickering* and was able to recapture and put a prize crew aboard before Captain Haraden could fetch with gunshot. With a British lieutenant from the *Achilles* in command, the prize was ordered to follow her captor. It was evident to the waiting Americans aboard the *Pickering* that the *Achilles* intended forcing an engagement, but night was falling and the English privateer bore off as if purposing to convoy her prize beyond harm's way and postpone pursuit until morning.

The hostile ships had been sighted from Bilboa harbor where the *Achilles* was well known, and the word swiftly passed through the city that the bold American was holding pluckily to her landfall as if preparing for an attempt to recapture her prize. The wind had died during the late afternoon and by sunset thousands of Spaniards and seamen from the vessels in the harbor had swarmed to crowd the headlands and the water's edge where they could see the towering *Achilles* and her smaller foe "like ships upon a painted ocean." An eye witness, Robert Cowan, said that "the *General Pickering* in comparison to her antagonist looked like a long boat by the side of a ship."

Because of lack of wind and the maneuvers of the *Achilles*, Captain Haraden thought there was no danger of an attack during the night, and he turned in to sleep without more ado, after ordering the officer of the watch to have him called if the *Achilles* drew nearer. His serene composure had its bracing effect upon the spirits of the men. At dawn the captain was awakened from a sound slumber by the news that the *Achilles* was bearing down upon them with her crew at quarters. "He

calmly rose, went on deck as if it had been some ordinary occasion," and ordered his ship made ready for action.

We know that he was a man of commanding appearance and an unruffled demeanor; the kind of fighting sailor who liked to have things done handsomely and with due regard for the effect of such matters upon his seamen.

Several of his crew had been transferred to the prize, and were now prisoners to the *Achilles*. The forty-five defenders being reduced to thirty-odd, Captain Haraden, in an eloquent and persuasive address to the sixty prisoners he had captured in the *Golden Eagle*, offered large rewards to volunteers who would enlist with the crew of the *Pickering*. A boatswain and ten men, whose ties of loyalty to the British flag must have been tenuous in the extreme, stepped forward and were assigned to stations with the American crew. Her strength was thus increased to forty-seven men and boys. The captain then made a final tour of the decks, assuring his men that although the *Achilles* appeared to be superior in force, "he had no doubt they would beat her if they were firm and steady, and did not throw away their fire." One of his orders to the men with small arms was: "Take particular aim at their white boot tops."

The kind of sea fighting that won imperishable prestige for American seamen belongs with a vanished era of history. As the gun crews of the *General Pickering* clustered behind their open ports, they saw to it that water tubs were in place, matches lighted, the crowbars, handspikes and "spung staves" and "rope spunges" placed in order by the guns. Then as they made ready to deliver the first broadside, the orders ran down the crowded low-beamed deck:

"Cast, off the tackles and breechings."

"Seize the breechings."

"Unstop the touch-hole."

"Ram home wad and cartridge."

"Shot the gun-wad."
"Run out the gun."
"Lay down handspikes and crows."
"Point your gun."
"FIRE."

The Yankee crew could hear the huzzas of the English gunners as the *Achilles* sought to gain the advantage of position. Captain Haraden had so placed his ship between the land and a line of shoals, that in closing with him the *Achilles* must receive a raking broadside fire. He knew that if it came to boarding, his little band must be overwhelmed by weight of numbers and he showed superb seamanship in choosing and maintaining a long range engagement.

The *Pickering* was still deep laden with sugar, and this, together with her small size, made her a difficult target to hull, while the *Achilles* towered above water like a small frigate. The Americans fired low, while the English broadsides flew high across the decks of the *Pickering*. This rain of fire killed the British volunteer boatswain aboard the *Pickering* and wounded eight of the crew early in the fight. Captain Haraden was exposed to these showers of case and round shot, but one of his crew reported that "all the time he was as calm and steady as amid a shower of snowflakes."

Meanwhile a multitude of spectators, estimated to number at least a hundred thousand, had assembled on shore. The city of Bilboa had turned out *en masse* to enjoy the rare spectacle of a dashing sea duel fought in the blue amphitheater of the harbor mouth. They crowded into fishing boats, pinnaces, cutters and row boats until from within a short distance of the smoke-shrouded *Pickering* the gay flotilla stretched to the shore so closely packed that an onlooker described it as a solid bridge of boats, across which a man might have made his way by leaping from one gunwale to another.

Captain Haraden was on the defensive. The stake for which he fought was to gain entrance to the port of Bilboa with his cargo and retake his prize, nor did he need to capture the *Achilles* to win a most signal victory. For two hours the two privateers were at it hammer and tongs, the British ship unable to outmaneuver the Yankee and the latter holding her vantage ground. At length the commander of the *Achilles* was forced to decide that he must either run away or be sunk where he was. He had been hulled through and through and his rigging was so cut up that it was with steadily increasing difficulty that he was able to avoid a raking from every broadside of his indomitable foe. It is related that he decided to run immediately after a flight of crowbars, with which the guns of the *Pickering* had been crammed to the muzzles, made hash of his decks and drove his gunners from their stations.

Captain Haraden made sail in chase. He offered his gunners a cash reward if they should be able to carry away a spar and disable the *Achilles* so that he might draw up alongside the enemy and renew the engagement. His fighting blood was at boiling heat and he no longer thought of making for Bilboa and thanking his lucky stars that he had gotten clear of so ugly a foe. But the *Achilles* was light, while her mainsail "was large as a ship of the line," and after a chase of three hours, the *General Pickering* had been distanced. Captain Haraden sorrowfully put about for Bilboa, and took some small satisfaction in his disappointment by overhauling and retaking the *Golden Eagle*, the prize which had been the original bone of contention.

The prize had been in sight of the action, during which the captured American prizemaster, master John Carnes, enjoyed an interesting conversation with the British prizemaster from the *Achilles* who had been placed in charge of the vessel.

Mr. Carnes informed his captor of the fighting strength of

the *General Pickering*. The British prizemaster rubbed his eyes when he saw the little Yankee vessel engage the *Achilles* and roundly swore that Carnes had lied to him. The latter stuck to his guns, however, and added by way of confirmation:

"If you knew Captain Jonathan Haraden as well as I do, you would not be surprised at this. It is just what I expected, and I think it not impossible, notwithstanding the disparity of force, that the *Achilles* will at least be beaten off, and I shall have the command of this prize again before night."

The Spanish populace welcomed Captain Haraden ashore as if he had been the hero of a bull fight. He was carried through the streets at the head of a triumphant procession and later compelled to face veritable broadsides of dinners and public receptions. His battle with the *Achilles* had been rarely spectacular and theatrical, and at sight of one of his elaborately embroidered waistcoats to-day, displayed in the Essex Institute, one fancies that he may have had the fondness for doing fine things in a fine way which made Nelson pin his medals on his coat before he went into action at Trafalgar.

In a narrative compiled from the stories of those who knew and sailed with this fine figure of a privateersman we are told that "in his person he was tall and comely; his countenance was placid, and his manners and deportment mild. His discipline on board ship was excellent, especially in time of action. Yet in the common concerns of life he was easy almost to a fault. So great was the confidence he inspired that if he but looked at a sail through his glass, and then told the helmsman to steer for her, the observation went round, 'If she is an enemy, she is ours.' His great characteristic was the most consummate self-possession on all occasions and in midst of perils, in which if any man equalled, none ever excelled him. His officers and men insisted he was more calm and cool amid the din of battle than at any other time; and the more deadly

the strife, the more imminent the peril, the more terrific the scene, the more perfect his self-command and serene intrepidity. In a word he was a hero."

Large and resonant words of tribute these, written in the long ago, and yet they are no fulsome eulogy of Jonathan Haraden of Salem.

During another voyage from Salem to France as a letter of marque, the *Pickering* discovered, one morning at daylight, a great English ship of the line looming within cannon shot. The enemy bore down in chase, but did not open fire, expecting to capture the Yankee cockleshell without having to injure her. He was fast overhauling the quarry, and Captain Haraden manned his sweeps. The wind was light and although one ball fired from a bowchaser sheared off three of his sweeps, or heavy oars, he succeeded in rowing away from his pursuer and made his escape. It was not a fight, but the incident goes to show how small by modern standards was the ship in which Jonathan Haraden made his dauntless way, when he could succeed in rowing her out of danger of certain capture.

In his early voyages in the *Pickering* she was commissioned as a letter of marque, carrying cargoes across the Atlantic, and fetching home provisions and munitions needed in the Colonies, but ready to fight "at the drop of the hat." She was later equipped with a slightly heavier armament and commissioned as a full-fledged privateer. With his sixteen guns Captain Haraden fought and took in one action no less than three British ships carrying a total number of forty-two guns. He made the briefest possible mention in his log of a victory which in its way was as remarkable as the triumph of the *Constitution* over the *Cyane* and the *Levant* in the second war with England.

It was while cruising as a privateer that the *Pickering* came in sight of three armed vessels sailing in company from Halifax to New York. This little squadron comprised a brig of four-

teen guns, a ship of sixteen guns and a sloop of twelve guns. They presented a formidable array of force, the ship alone appearing to be a match for the *Pickering* in guns and men as they exchanged signals with each other, formed a line and made ready for action. "Great as was the confidence of the officers and crew in the bravery and judgment of Captain Haraden, they evinced, by their looks, that they thought on this occasion he was going to hazard too much; upon which he told them he had no doubt whatever that if they would do their duty, he would quickly capture the three vessels, and this he did with great ease by going alongside of each of them, one after another."

This unique feat in the history of privateering actions was largely due to Captain Haraden's seamanship in that he was able so to handle the *Pickering* that he fought three successive single ship actions instead of permitting the enemy to concentrate or combine their attack.

Somewhat similar to these tactics was the manner in which he took two privateer sloops while he was cruising off Bermuda. They were uncommonly fast and agile vessels and they annoyed the Yankee skipper by retaking several of his prizes before he could send them free of this molestation. The sloops had no mind to risk an action with Haraden whose vessel they had recognized. So after nightfall he sent down his fore topgallant yard and mast, otherwise disguised the *Pickering*, and vanished from that part of the seas. A day later he put about and jogged back after the two privateers, putting out drags astern to check his speed. The *Pickering* appeared to be a plodding merchantman lumbering along a West India course.

As soon as he was sighted by his pestiferous and deluded foes, they set out in chase of him as easy booty. Letting the first sloop come with easy range, Jonathan Haraden stripped the *Pickering* of the painted canvas screens that had covered

Derby Wharf, Salem, Mass., as it appears to-day. Here the East India ships once lay three deep, and these decaying warehouses were filled with the riches of the most remote lands a century ago

her gun ports, let go a murderous broadside and captured the sloop almost as soon as it takes to tell it. Then showing English colors above the Stars and Stripes aboard the *Pickering*, as if she had been captured, he went after the consort and look her as neatly as he had gathered the other.

Captain Haraden knew how to play the gentleman in this bloody game of war on the ocean. An attractive light is thrown upon his character by an incident which happened during a cruise in the *Pickering*. He fell in with a humble Yankee trading schooner which had been to the West Indies with lumber and was jogging home with the beggarly proceeds of the voyage. Her skipper signaled Captain Haraden, put out a boat and went aboard the privateer to tell a tale of woe. A little while before he had been overhauled by a British letter of marque schooner which had robbed him of his quadrant, compass and provisions, stripped his craft of much of her riggings, and with a curse and a kick from her captain, left him to drift and starve.

Captain Haraden was very indignant at such wanton and impolite conduct and at once sent his men aboard the schooner to re-rig her, provisioned her cabin and forecastle, loaned the skipper instruments with which to work his passage home and sent him on his way rejoicing. Then having inquired the course of the plundering letter of marque when last seen, he made sail to look for her. He was lucky enough to fall in and capture the offender next day. Captain Haraden dressed himself in his best and, to add dignity to the occasion, summoned the erring British skipper to his cabin and there roundly rebuked and denounced him for his piratical conduct toward a worthless little lumber schooner. He gave his own crew permission to make reprisals, which probably means that they helped themselves to whatever pleased their fancy and kicked and cuffed the offending seamen the length of their deck. Captain Hara-

den then allowed the letter of marque to resume her voyage. "He would not, even under these circumstances, sink or destroy a ship worthless as a prize and thus ruin a brother sailor."

Off the Capes of the Delaware, Captain Haraden once captured an English brig of war, although the odds were against him, by "the mere terror of his name." He afterward told friends ashore how this extraordinary affair occurred. There was a boy on the *Pickering*, one of the captain's most ardent adorers, a young hero worshiper, who believed the *Pickering* capable of taking anything short of a line of battle ship. He had been put aboard a prize off the Capes, which prize had been captured, while making port, by the British brig of war. The lad was transferred to the brig with his comrades of the prize crew, and was delighted a little later to see the *Pickering* standing toward them. Being asked why he sang and danced with joy, the boy explained with the most implicit assurance:

"That is my master in that ship, and I shall soon be with him."

"Your master," cried, the British bos'n, "and who in the devil is he?"

"Why, Captain Haraden. You can't tell me you never heard of him? He takes everything he goes alongside of, and he will soon have you."

This unseemly jubilation on an enemy's deck was reported to the captain of the brig. He summoned the boy aft, and was told the same story with even more emphasis. Presently the *Pickering* ran close down, and approached the brig to leeward. There was a strong wind and the listed deck of the brig lay exposed to the fire of the privateer. Captain Haraden shouted through his trumpet:

"Haul down your colors, or I will fire into you."

The captain of the brig-of-war had wasted precious moments, and his vessel was so situated at that moment that her guns could

not be worked to leeward because of the seas that swept along her ports. After a futile fire from deck swivels and small arms, she surrendered and next day was anchored off Philadelphia.

One or two more stories and we must needs have done with the exploits of Jonathan Haraden. One of them admirably illustrates the sublime assurance of the man and in an extreme degree that dramatic quality which adorned his deeds. During one of his last voyages in the *Pickering* he attacked a heavily armed "king's mail packet," bound to England from the West Indies. These packets were of the largest type of merchant vessels of that day, usually carrying from fifteen to twenty guns, and complements of from sixty to eighty men. Such a ship was expected to fight hard and was more than a match for most privateers.

The king's packet was a foe to test Captain Haraden's mettle and he found her a tough antagonist. They fought four full hours, "or four glasses," as the log records it, after which Captain Haraden found that he must haul out of the action and repair damages to rigging and hull. He discovered also, that he had used all the powder on board except one charge. It would have been a creditable conclusion of the matter if he had called the action a drawn battle and gone on his way.

It was in his mind, however, to try an immensely audacious plan which could succeed only by means of the most cold blooded courage on his part. Ramming home his last charge of powder and double shotting the gun, he again ranged alongside his plucky enemy, who was terribly cut up, but still unconquered, and hailed her:

"I will give you five minutes to haul down your colors. If they are not down at the end of that time, I will fire into and sink you, so help me God."

It was a test of mind, not of armament. The British commander was a brave man who had fought his ship like a hero.

But the sight of this infernally indomitable figure on the quarterdeck of the shot-rent *Pickering*, the thought of being exposed to another broadside at pistol range, the aspect of the blood-stained, half-naked privateersmen grouped at their guns with matches lighted, was too much for him. Captain Haraden stood, watch in hand, calling off the minutes so that his voice could be heard aboard the packet:

"ONE—"

"TWO—"

"THREE."

But he had not said "FOUR," when the British colors fluttered down from the yard and the packet ship was his.

When a boat from the *Pickering* went alongside the prize, the crew "found the blood running from her scuppers, while the deck appeared more like the floor of a slaughter house than the deck of a ship. On the quarterdeck, in an armchair, sat an old gentleman, the Governor of the island from which the packet came. During the whole action he had loaded and fired a heavy blunderbuss, and in the course of the battle had received a ball in his cheek, which, in consequence of the loss of teeth, had passed out through the other cheek without giving a mortal wound."

A truly splendid "old gentleman" and a hero of the first water!

In the latter part of the war Captain Haraden commanded the *Julius Cæsar*, and a letter written by an American in Martinique in 1782 to a friend in Salem is evidence that his activities had not diminished:

"Captain Jonathan Haraden, in the letter of marque ship, *Julius Cæsar*, forty men and fourteen guns, off Bermuda, in sight of two English brigs, one of twenty and the other of sixteen guns, took a schooner which was a prize to one of them, but they both declined to attack him. On the 5th ult., he fell in with two British vessels, being a ship of eighteen guns and a brig of six-

teen, both of which he fought five hours and got clear of them. The enemy's ship was much shattered and so was the *Cæsar*, but the latter's men were unharmed. Captain Haraden was subsequently presented with a silver plate by the owners of his ship, as commemorative of his bravery and skill. Before he reached Martinico he had a severe battle with another English vessel which he carried thither with him as a prize."

Captain Haraden, the man who took a thousand cannon from the British on the high seas, died in Salem in 1803 in his fifty-ninth year. His descendants treasure the massive pieces of plate given him by the owners of the *Pickering* and the *Julius Cæsar*, as memorials of one who achieved far more to win the independence of his nation than many a landsman whose military records won him the recognition of his government and a conspicuous place in history.

While the important ports of Boston, New York, and others to the southward were blockaded by squadrons of British war vessels, the Salem privateers managed to slip to sea and spread destruction. It happened on a day of March, in 1781, that two bold English privateers were cruising off Cape Cod, menacing the coastwise trading sloops and schooners bound in and out of Salem and nearby ports. The news was carried ashore by incoming vessels which had been compelled to run for it, and through the streets and along the wharves of Salem went the call for volunteers. The ships *Brutus* and *Neptune* were lying in the stream and with astonishing expedition they were armed and made ready for sea as privateers.

One of the enemy's vessels was taken and brought into Salem only two days after the alarm had been given. Tradition relates that while the two Salem privateers were sailing home in company with their prize, the *Brutus* was hailed by an English sloop which had been loitering the coast on mischief bent. The Yankee skippers seeking to get their prize into port without

risk of losing her in battle, had hoisted English colors. Dusk had deepened into darkness when from the quarterdeck of the British sloop sounded the husky challenge:

"Ship ahoy. What ship is that?"

"The English armed ship *Terror*," answered the Salem captain.

"Where are you bound?"

"Just inside the Cape for safety."

"Safety from what?" asked the guileless Englishman.

"A whole fleet of damned Yankee privateers."

"Where are they?"

"They bear from the pitch of the Cape, about sou'east by East, four leagues distant."

"Aye, aye, we'll look out for them and steer clear," returned John Bull, and thereupon with a free wind he stood out to sea leaving the *Brutus* to lay her course without more trouble.

Not all the Salem privateers were successful. In fairness to the foe it should be recorded that one in three, or fifty-four in a total of one hundred and fifty-eight privateers and letter of marque ships were lost by capture during the war. Many of these, however, were scarcely more than decked rowboats armed with one gun and a few muskets. But of the four hundred and forty-five prizes taken by Salem ships, nine-tenths of them reached American ports in safety.

There was a lad who had been captured in a Salem privateer, and forced to enlist in the English navy. He was not of that heroic mold which preferred death to surrender and the hardships of prison life appear to have frightened him into changing his colors. He wrote home to Salem in 1781:

"Honoured Father and Mother:

"I send you these few lines to let you know that I am in good health on board the *Hyeane* Frigate which I was taken by and

I hope I shall be at home in a few months' time. When I was taken by the *Hyeane* I was carried to England, where I left the ship and went on board a brig going to New York. There I was prest out of her into the *Phœnix*, forty-eight gun ship. I remained in her four months and was then taken on board the *Hyeane* again, where I am still kept. We are lying in Carlisle Bay in Barbadoes. We are now going on an expedition, but will soon be back again when the captain says he will let me come home."

Alas, the boy who had weakened when it came to the test of his loyalty was not so well pleased with his choice when peace came. In August, 1783, we find him writing to his mother:

"I cannot think of returning home till the people of New England are more reconciled, for I hear they are so inveterate against all who have ever been in the English navy that I can't tell but their rage may extend to hang me as they do others."

Another letter of that time, while it does not deal wholly with privateering, views the war from the interesting standpoint of a Loyalist or Tory of Salem who was writing to friends of like sympathies who had also taken refuge in England. It is to be inferred from his somewhat caustic comments about certain *nouveaux riche* families of the town that the fortunes of privateering had suddenly prospered some, while it had beggared the estate of others.

"Bristol, England, February 10, 1780.

"Perhaps it may amuse you to be made acquainted with a few particulars of our own country and town, that may not have come to your knowledge. . . . It is a melancholy truth that while some are wallowing in undeserved wealth that plunder and Rapine has thrown into their hands, the wisest and most peacable, and most deserving, such as you and I know, are now suffering for want, accompanied by many indignities that a

licencious and lawless people can pour forth upon them. Those who a few years ago were the *meaner people* are now by a Strange Revolution become almost the only men in Power, riches and influences; those who on the contrary were leaders in the highest line of life are very glad at this time to be unknown and unnoticed, to escape insult and plunder and the wretched condition of all who are not Violent Adopters of Republican Principles. The Cabots of Beverly, who you know had but five years ago a very moderate share of property are now said to be by far the most wealthy in New England. . . . Nathan Goodale by an agency concern in Privateers and buying up Shares, counts almost as many pounds as most of his neighbors."

What may be called the day's work of the Revolutionary privateers is compactly outlined in the following series of reports from Salem annals. In an unfinished manuscript dealing with privateering the late James Kimball of Salem made this note:

"June 26, 1857. This day saw John W. Osgood, son of John Osgood, who stated that during the war of the Revolution his father was first Lieutenant of the Brig *Fame* commanded by Samuel Hobbs of Salem, from whence they sailed. When three days out they fell in with a British man-of-war which gave chase to the Privateer which outsailed the man-of-war, who, finding that she was getting away from him, fired a round shot which came on board and killed Captain Hobbs, which was the only injury sustained during the chase.

"Upon the death of Captain Hobbs the crew mutinied, saying the captain was dead, and the cruise was up, refused further duty and insisted upon returning to Salem. Lieutenant Osgood now becoming the captain, persisted in continuing the Cruise, yet with so small a number as remained on his side, found great difficulty in working the Ship. The mutineers stood in fear,

but part of the officers stood by Captain Osgood. No one feeling willing to appear at their head, they one day Sent him a Round Robin requiring the return of the Privateer. Captain Osgood still persisted in continuing the cruise.

"When an English Vessell hove in sight he told them that there was a Prize, that they had only to take her and he would soon find others. One of the Crew, to the leader to whom they all looked, replied that he would return to his duty. All the rest followed him, sail was made and they soon came up with the Prize. She proved to be a man-of-war in disguise, with drags out. As soon as this was discovered the Privateer attempted to escape, but she could not and was captured and carried to Halifax."

Selecting other typical incidents almost at random as they were condensed in newspaper records, these seem to be worthy of notice:

"June 31, 1778. Much interest is made here for the release of Resolved Smith from his captivity. On his way from the West Indies to North Carolina he was taken, and confined on board the prison ship *Judith* at New York. Describing his situation, he said that he and other sufferers were shut in indiscriminately with the sick, dead and dying. 'I am now closing the eyes of the last two out of five healthy men that came about three weeks ago with me on board this ship.'"

"July, 1779. The Brig *Wild Cat*, Captain Daniel Ropes, seventy-five men, fourteen guns, is reported as having taken a schooner belonging to the British navy. The next day, however, he was captured by a frigate and for his activity against the enemy was confined in irons at Halifax. On hearing of his severe treatment, our General Court ordered that an English officer of equal rank be put in close confinement until Captain Ropes is liberated and exchanged."

"Feb. 13, 1781. Ship *Pilgrim*, Captain Robinson, reported

that on Christmas Day he had a battle with a Spanish Frigate and forced her to retire, and on January 5th engaged a privateer of thirty-three men, twenty-two guns, for three hours and took her. He had nine men killed and two wounded while his opponent had her captain and four more killed and thirteen wounded."

"March 13, 1781. It is reported that the Brig *Montgomery*, Captain John Carnes, had engaged a large British cutter, lost his lieutenant and had five wounded. From another account we learn that after a hard fight he succeeded in beating his opponent off."

"It is reported on the 19th of the same month that the ship *Franklin*, Captain John Turner, had taken a ship after a fight of forty minutes, having had one killed and one wounded. The prize had two killed and eight wounded."

"August 26, 1781. The ship *Marquis de Lafayette*, seventy-five men and sixteen guns, reported as having attacked a brig of thirty-two guns, upwards of two hours, but was obliged to draw off, much damaged, with eight killed and fourteen wounded and leaving the enemy with seventeen killed besides others wounded."

Privateering was destined to have a powerful influence upon the seafaring fortunes of Salem. Elias Hasket Derby, for example, the first great American shipping merchant and the wealthiest man in the Colonies, found his trading activities ruined by the Revolution. He swung his masterly energy and large resources into equipping privateers. It was his standing offer that after as many shares as possible had been subscribed for in financing any Salem privateer, he would take up the remainder, if more funds were needed. It is claimed that Mr. Derby was interested in sending to sea more than one-half of the one hundred and fifty-eight privateers which hailed from Salem during the Revolution. After the first two years of war

he discerned the importance of speed, and that many of the small privateers of his town had been lost or captured because they were unfit for their business. He established his own shipyards, studied naval architecture, and began to build a class of vessels vastly superior in size, model and speed to any previously launched in the Colonies. They were designed to be able to meet a British sloop of war on even terms.

These ships took a large number of prizes, but Elias Hasket Derby gradually converted them from privateers to letters of marque, so that they could carry cargoes to distant ports and at the same time defend themselves against the largest class of British privateers. At the beginning of the war he owned seven sloops and schooners. When peace came he had four ships of from three hundred to three hundred and fifty tons, which were very imposing merchant vessels for that time.

It was with these ships, created by the needs of war, that the commerce of Salem began to reach out for ports on the other side of the world. They were the vanguard of the great fleet which through the two generations to follow were to carry the Stars and Stripes around the Seven Seas. Ready to man them was the bold company of privateersmen, schooled in a life of the most hazardous adventure, braced to face all risks in the peaceful war for trade where none of their countrymen had ever dared to seek trade before. While they had been dealing shrewd blows for their country's cause in war, they had been also in preparation for the dawning age of Salem supremacy on the seas in the rivalries of commerce, pioneers in a brilliant and romantic era which was destined to win unique fame for their port.

# CHAPTER VI

## CAPTAIN LUTHER LITTLE'S OWN STORY

## (1771–1799)

CAPTAIN LUTHER LITTLE made no great figure in the history of his times, but he left in his own words the story of his life at sea which ancient manuscript contributes a full length portrait of the kind of men who lived in the coastwise towns of New England in the eighteenth century. He was not of Salem birth, but he commanded a letter of marque ship out of Salem during the Revolution, which makes it fitting that the manuscript of his narrative should have come into the hands of his grandson, Philip Little, of Salem. This old time seaman's memoir, as he dictates it in his old age, reflects and makes alive again the day's work of many a stout-hearted ship's company of forgotten American heroes.

Born in Marshfield, Massachusetts, in 1756, Luther Little was a sturdy man grown at the beginning of the Revolution and had already spent five years at sea. At the age of fifteen he forsook his father's farm and shipped on board a coasting sloop plying between Maine and the South Carolina ports. On one of these voyages he was taken ill with a fever and was left ashore in a settlement on the Pimlico River, North Carolina. The planter's family who cared for the lad through his long and helpless illness were big-hearted and cheery folk, and his description of a "reaping bee," as enjoyed a hundred and forty years ago, is quaintly diverting.

"When the evening amusements began our host performed on the violin and the young people commenced dancing. I was brought down stairs by one of the daughters and placed on a chair in one corner of the room to witness their sports. They got so merry in the dance that I was unheeded, and they whirled so hard against me as to knock me from my chair. One of the young women caught me in her arms, and carried me to the chamber and laid me on the mat. They held their frolic until midnight and eight or ten of the girls tarried till morning. My mat lay in one corner of the garret, and they were to occupy another on the opposite side. When they came upstairs they commenced performing a jumping match after making preparations for the same by taking off some of their clothes. They performed with much agility, when one of the stranger girls observing me in one corner of the garret exclaimed with much surprise: 'Who is that?' The answer was: 'It's only a young man belonging to the North that is here sick, and won't live three days. Never mind him.'"

His sloop having returned, this sixteen-year-old sailor surprised his kind host by gaining sufficient strength to go on board and soon after set sail for Martinique in the West Indies. The Revolutionary Committee of North Carolina had ordered the captain to fetch back a supply of powder and shot. He took aboard this cargo after driving overboard and threatening to blow out the brains of an English lieutenant who had it in mind to make a prize of the sloop while she lay at Martinique.

It was out of the frying pan into the fire, for when the vessel reached the Carolina coast, "the news of our unexpected arrival had been noised abroad," relates Luther Little, "and the King's tender lay within a few miles of the bar in wait for us. Twelve pilot boats from Ocrakoke came off to us and informed us that the tender was coming out to take us. We loaded the pilot boats with powder, and the balls, which were in kegs, we

hove overboard. By this time the tender made her appearance and ordered us all on board, made a prize of the sloop and ordered her for Norfolk where lay the English fleet. When our pilot and his crew went to take their boat I mingled with them and walked quietly on board without being observed, and set hard at rowing with one of the oars. The captain and the rest of the crew were made prisoners."

The pilot boat landed young Little at Ocrakoke, where he found that the other pilots who had taken the powder ashore had stolen ten casks of it, scurvy patriots that they were. So the stout-hearted lad of sixteen borrowed an old musket and stood guard all night over the powder kegs. "The next morning," he tells us, "the pilots finding they could plunder no more of the powder, agreed to carry it up the Pimlico River to the several County Committees for whom it was destined." Luther Little went with them and saw to it that the powder reached its owners.

One Colonel Simpson offered him a small schooner laden with corn to be delivered down the Pongo River. She had a crew of slaves which the boy skipper loftily rejected and took his little schooner single-handed downstream, making port after a two days' voyage. While at anchor there came a hurricane which had a most surprising effect on his fortunes. "I shut myself down in the cabin," said he, "and in the course of the night found the vessel adrift. Not daring to go on deck I waited the result and soon felt the vessel strike. After thumping a while she keeled to one side and remained still. At daylight next morning I ventured on deck and found myself safe on terra firma, in the woods, one half mile from the water, the tide having left me safe among the trees."

Making his way on foot to the home of the consignee, he reported his arrival, explained the situation and wrote his employer that he had delivered his cargo safe, and that he

would find his schooner half a mile in the woods anchored safely among the trees.

The marooned seaman had not to wait long for another berth. On the same day of his escape he saw a sloop beating out of the river and hailed her skipper. A foremast hand was wanted and Little shipped aboard for the West Indies. During the passage they were chased by an English frigate, and ran in under the guns of the Dutch fort at St. Eustacia. Cargo and vessel were sold, and Luther Little transferred himself to another sloop bound for Rhode Island.

"Arriving safe after a passage of eleven days," he writes, "I took my pack and travelled to Little Compton where I had an uncle. Here I stayed one week, and then marched home on foot, the distance of seventy miles, without one cent in my pocket. I had been absent eleven months."

A few months later Luther Little shipped on board a letter of marque brig bound to Cadiz. Off Cape Finnesterre a storm piled the vessel on the rocks where she went to pieces. Little was washed over the bows, but caught a trailing rope and hauled himself aboard with a broken leg. While he was in this plight the brig broke in two, and somehow, with the help of his fellow seamen, he was conveyed ashore to a Spanish coast fortification. Thence they were taken by boat to Bellisle. The infant Uncle Sam was not wholly neglectful of his subjects, even though he was in the death-grip of a Revolution, for to the inn at Bellisle there came "a coach with four white horses and Mr. John Baptiste, an officer in the employ of the United States government, to enquire if there were any from off that wreck who needed assistance and wished to go to the hospital."

Luther Little lay in a hospital at Lisbon from autumn into spring where, he relates: "I was treated with great kindness and attention and although in my midnight dreams the spirits of a kind mother and beloved sisters would often hover around

my pillow, still on waking, the thought that I had escaped an early death was ever present to the mind, and I felt that although far from home and friends, I had every reason to be thankful."

The canny youngster had a shoe with a hollow heel, which hiding place he had prepared before leaving home, and in which he had tucked eight gold dollars with this sagacious reflection:

"Previous to this I had been left among strangers perfectly destitute without money either to assist myself, or to remunerate them for kindness received. I was now leaving home again, the future was covered with a veil which a wise Providence had never permitted human knowledge to rend. I knew not with what this voyage might be fraught—evil or good. I therefore resolved if possible to have something laid up as the old adage expresses, 'for a wet day.'"

When Luther was discharged from the Spanish hospital eleven other luckless American seamen who had been cast on their beam ends were set adrift with him. The shoe with the hollow heel held the only cash in the party who undertook an overland journey of three hundred miles to the nearest seaport whence they might expect to find passage home. While spending the night at a port called St. Ubes there came ashore the captain and lieutenant of an English privateer. These were very courteous foemen, for the captain told how he had been made prisoner by a Yankee crew, carried into Salem, and treated so exceedingly well that he was very grateful. Thereupon he ordered his lieutenant to go off to the privateer and fetch a dozen of pickled neats' tongues which he gave the stranded pilgrims to put in their packs. He also turned over to them a Portuguese pilot to escort them through the desolate and hostile country in which their journey lay. With the Portuguese, the neats' tongues, and wine in leather bottles, paid for from the hollow heel, the American tars trudged along,

sleeping on the ground and in shepherds' sheds until they reached the boundary between Spain and Portugal.

"The Spanish and English were at war," relates Luther Little, "and the stable in which we slept was surrounded by Spaniards who swore we were English and they would take us prisoners. In vain the landlord of the nearby tavern expostulated with them, saying we were Americans in distress traveling to Faro. They still persisted in forcing the door. The pilot told them that we were desperate men armed to the teeth and at length they disappeared."

They were among a set of accomplished thieves, for next day they bought some mackerel and stowed it in their packs from which it was artfully stolen by the very lad who had sold it to them. The pilot cheered them with tales of highway robbery and murder as they fared on, indicating with eloquent gestures sundry stones which marked the burial places of slain travelers. They were once attacked by a gang of brigands who stole their mule and slender store of baggage, but the seamen rallied with such headlong energy that the robbers took to the bushes.

Reaching the port of Faro, they found a good-hearted mate of a Portuguese brig who gave them a ham, four dozen biscuit and a part of a cheese. The French Consul also befriended them, and supplied a boat to take them to a port called Iammont. Although the ingenuous Luther Little explains their next adventure as pacific, it is not unfair to presume that his company committed a mild-mannered kind of piracy. However, he tells the tale in this fashion:

"We reached the mouth of the Iammont River next morning. Here we met a Spanish shallop coming out, bound to Cadiz, loaded with small fish and manned with six men. The Captain was very old. We shifted on board this shallop and sailed toward Cadiz with a fair wind. When night approached the

Spanish captain having no compass, steered by a star; at ten the clouds came over and the stars were shut in, the wind blowing fresh. The Spaniards fell on their knees, imploring the aid of their saints. Directly the captain concluded to go on shore, and took his cask of oil to break the surf, and bore away toward the shore. We being the strongest party (eleven to six), hauled the shallop onto her course and obliged the old Spaniard to take the helm, it still continuing very thick. At one that morning we struck on the Porpoise Rocks at the mouth of Cadiz Bay; we shipped two seas which filled the boat. With our hats we bailed out water, fish and all, directly made Cadiz light, and ran in near the wall of the city. The sentry from the wall told us to come no nearer, whereupon the old captain hauled down sails and let go his anchor. At daylight I paid one Spanish dollar apiece passage money and we left the boat.

"We went to the gate of the city and sat down on some ship timber. One of our men was then two days sick with a fever. When the gate was opened we marched in, two of us carrying the sick man. A little way inside we met a Spaniard who spoke English. He invited us to his house, and gave us a breakfast of coffee and fish, and told us we were welcome to remain there until we could find a passage home."

Next day Luther Little as spokesman waited upon John Jay, United States Minister to the Court of Madrid, who had come to Cadiz with his wife in the *Confederacy* frigate. Minister Jay put the sick man in a hospital while the others sought chances to work their way home. They found in the harbor an English brig which had captured an American ship and was then in her turn retaken by the Yankee crew who had risen upon the prize crew. According to Luther Little this Yankee mate, Morgan by name, was a first-class fighting man, for he had sailed the brig into Cadiz, flying the Stars and Stripes, with only a boy or

two to help him. She carried twelve guns and needed a heavy crew to risk the passage home to Cape Ann.

Reinforced by the captain and crew of another American vessel which had been taken by an English frigate, Luther Little's party sought Minister Jay and explained the situation. They could work their passage in the brig, but they had no provisions. Would he help them? Mr. Jay made this singular compact, that he would give them provisions if they would sign a document promising to pay for the stores at the Navy Yard in Boston, or to serve aboard a Continental ship until the debt was worked out. All hands signed this paper by which they put themselves in pawn to serve their country's flag, and the brig sailed from Cadiz.

After thirty days they were on George's Bank where they lay becalmed while an English privateer swept down toward them with sweeps out. A commander was chosen by vote, decks cleared for action, and two guns shifted over to the side toward the privateer. "The captain ordered his crew to quarters. When the privateer came up to us we gave her a broadside; she fired upon us, then dropped astern and came up on the larboard side," so Little describes it. "As soon as the guns would bear upon her we gave her another broadside. They returned the same. The privateer schooner giving up the contest, dropped astern and made off, we giving her three cheers."

Without mishap the brig arrived off Cape Ann, and continued on to Boston. There Luther Little obtained money from friends and paid off his share of the debt to the Navy Board. He was the only one of the eleven of his party who redeemed themselves, however, the others going aboard Continental cruisers as stipulated by the shrewd Minister Jay who, in this fashion, secured almost a dozen lusty seamen for the navy.

"Once more I reached home entirely destitute," comments

Luther Little, who tarried on his father's farm a few weeks, and then once more "bade home and those dear to me, adieu." This was in the year 1780. He entered on board the United States ship *Protector*, of twenty-six guns and 230 men, as midshipman and prizemaster. Her commander was John Foster Williams, and her first lieutenant, George Little, was a brother of our hero. Their names deserve remembrance, for the *Protector* fought one of the most heroic and desperate engagements of the Revolution of which Midshipman Little shall tell you in his own words:

"We lay off in Nantasket Roads making ready for a six months' cruise, and put to sea early in April of 1780. Our course was directed eastward, keeping along the coast till we got off Mount Desert, most of the time in a dense fog, without encountering friend or foe. On the morning of June ninth, the fog began to clear away, and the man at the masthead gave notice that he discovered a ship to the windward of us. We perceived her to be a large ship under English colors, standing down before the wind for us. We were on the leeward side.

"As she came down upon us she appeared to be as large as a seventy-four. The captain and lieutenant were looking at her through their glasses, and after consulting decided that she was not an English frigate but a large king's packet ship, and the sooner we got alongside of her the better. The boatswain was ordered to pipe all hands to quarters, and clear the ship for action. Hammocks were brought up and stuffed into the nettings, decks wet and sanded, matches lighted and burning, bulkheads hooked up.

"We were not deceived respecting her size. It afterwards proved she was of eleven hundred tons burden, a Company ship which had cruised in the West Indies for some time and then took a cargo of sugar and tobacco at St. Kitts bound to

London. She carried thirty-six twelve-pounders upon the gun deck, and was furnished with two hundred and fifty men, and was called the *Admiral Duff*, Richard Strange, master. We were to the leeward of her and standing to the northward under cruising sail. She came down near us, and aimed to pass us and go ahead. After passing by to the leeward she hove to under fighting colors. We were all this time under English colors and observed her preparing for action. Very soon I heard the sailing master call for his trumpet:

"'Let fall the foresail, sheet home the main topgallant sail.'

"We steered down across her stern, and hauled up under her lee quarter. At the same time we were breeching our guns aft to bring her to bear. Our first lieutenant possessed a very powerful voice; he hailed the ship from the gang-board and enquired:

"'What ship is that?'

"He was answered 'The *Admiral Duff*.'

"'Where are you from and where bound?'

"'From a cruise bound to London,' they answered, and then enquired: 'What ship is that?'

"We gave no answer. The captain ordered a broadside given, and colors changed at the first flash of a gun, and as the thirteen stripes took the place of the English ensign they gave us three cheers and fired a broadside. They partly shot over us, their ship being so much higher than ours, cutting away some of our rigging. The action commenced within pistol shot and now began a regular battle, broadside to broadside.

"After we had engaged one half hour there came in a cannon ball through the side and killed Mr. Scollay, one of our midshipmen. He commanded the fourth twelve-pounder from the stern, I commanded the third. The ball took him in the head. His brains flew upon my gun and into my face. The man at my gun who rammed down the charge was a stout Irishman.

Immediately on the death of Mr. Scolley he stripped himself of his shirt and exclaimed:

"'An' faith, if they kill me they shall tuck no rags into my insides.'

"The action continued about an hour when all the topmen on board the enemy's ship were killed by our marines, who were seventy in number, all Americans. Our marines also killed the man at the wheel, caused the ship to come down upon us, and her cat-head stove in our quarter-gallery.

"We lashed their jib-boom to our main-shrouds, and our marines from the quarterdeck firing into their port holes kept them from charging. We were ordered from our quarters to board, but before we were able the lashings broke. We were ordered back to quarters to charge our guns when the other ship shooting alongside of us, the yards nearly locked. We gave her a broadside which cut away her mizzen mast and made great havoc among them. We perceived her sinking, at the same time saw that her main topgallant sail was on fire, which ran down the rigging and caught a hogshead of cartridges under the quarterdeck and blew it up.

"At this time from one of their forward guns there came into the port where I commanded a charge of grape shot. With three of them I was wounded, one between my neck bone and wind-pipe, one through my jaw lodging in the roof of my mouth, and taking off a piece of my tongue, the third through the upper lip, taking away part of the lip and all of my upper teeth. I was immediately taken to the cockpit, to the surgeon. My gun was fired only once afterward; I had fired nineteen times. I lay unattended to, being considered mortally wounded and was past by that the wounds of those more likely to live might be dressed. I was perfectly sensible and heard the surgeon's remark:

"'Let Little lay. Attend to the others first. He will die.'

Captain Luther Little

(The scars and disfigurement left by wounds received in the action with the *Admiral Duff* have been faithfully reproduced by the painter)

"Perceiving me motion to him he came to me and began to wash off the blood, and dress my wound. After dressing the lip and jaw he was turning from me. I put my hand to my neck, and he returned and examined my neck, pronouncing it the deepest wound of the three. I bled profusely, the surgeon said two gallons.

"By this time the enemy's ship was sunk and nothing was to be seen of her. She went down on fire with colours flying. Our boats were injured by the shots and our carpenters were repairing them in order to pull out and pick up the men of the English that were afloat. They succeeded in getting fifty-five, one half wounded and scalded.

"The first lieutenant told me that such was their pride when on the brink of a watery grave, that they fought like demons, preferring death with the rest of their comrades rather than captivity, and that it was with much difficulty that many of them were forced into the boats. Our surgeon amputated limbs from five of the prisoners, and attended them as if they had been of our own crew. One of the fifty-five was then sick with the West Indies fever and had floated out of his hammock between decks. The weather was excessively warm and in less than ten days sixty of our men had taken the epidemic.

"The *Admiral Duff* had two American captains, with their crews, on board as prisoners. These (the captains) were among the fifty-five saved by our boats. One of them told Captain Williams that he was with Captain Strange when our vessel hove in sight, that he asked him what he thought of her, and told him he thought her one of the Continental frigates. Captain Strange thought not, but he wished she might be; at any rate were she only a Salem privateer she would be a clever little prize to take home with him. During the battle while Captain Williams was walking the quarterdeck a shot from the enemy

took his speaking trumpet from his hand, but he picked it up and with great calmness continued his orders.*

"We sailed for the coast of Nova Scotia near to Halifax. After cruising there about a week we discovered a large ship steering for us, and soon discovered her to be an English frigate. We hove about and ran from her, our men being sick, we did not dare to engage her. This was at four o'clock in the afternoon. The frigate gained on us fast. When she came up near us we fired four stern chasers, and kept firing. When she got near our stern she luffed and gave us a broadside which did no other damage save lodging one shot in the mainmast and cutting away some rigging. We made a running fight until dark, the enemy choosing not to come alongside. In the evening she left us and hauled her wind to the southward and we for the north."

The captain of the *Protector* needed wood and water and so set sail for the Maine coast where he landed his invalids, converting a farmer's barn into a temporary hospital with the

*In the log book of the *Protector* Captain Williams described the engagement as follows: "*June 9th*, 1780. At 7 A.M. saw a ship to the Westward, we stood for her under English colours, the ship standing athaught us, under English colours, appeared to be a large ship. At 11 came alongside of her, hailed her, she answered from Jamaica. I shifted my colours and gave her a broadside; she soon returned us another. The action was very heavy for near three Glasses, when she took fire and blew up. Got out the Boats to save the men, took 55 of them, the greatest part of them wounded with our shot and burnt when the ship blew up. She was called the *Admiral Duff* of 32 guns, Comman'd by Richard Strang from St. Kitts and Eustatia, ladened with Sugar and Tobacco, bound to London. We lost in the action one man, Mr. Benja. Scollay and 5 wounded. Rec'd several shot in our Hull and several of our shrouds and stays shot away."

Ebenezer Fox who was a seaman aboard the *Protector* related: "We ascertained that the loss of the enemy was prodigious, compared with ours. This disparity, however, will not appear so remarkable when it is considered that, although their ship was larger than ours, it was not so well supplied with men; having no marines to use the musket, they fought with their guns alone, and as their ship lay much higher out of the water than ours, the greater part of their shot went over us, cutting our rigging and sails without injuring our men. We had about seventy marines who did great execution with their muskets, picking off the officers and men with a sure and deliberate aim."

surgeon's mate in charge. While the cruiser lay in harbor Luther Little's sense of humor would not permit this incident to go unforgotten:

"Among our crew was a fellow half Indian and half negro who coveted a fatted calf belonging to a farmer on the shore. His evil genius persuaded him to pilfer the same, but he could find only one man willing to assist him. Cramps, which was the negro's name, took a boat one evening and went on shore to commit the depredation. He secured the victim and returned to the ship without discovery. He arrived under the ship's bows and called for his partner in crime to lower the rope to hoist the booty on board, but his fellow conspirator had dodged below and it so happened that the first lieutenant was on deck. Cramps, thinking it was his co-worker in iniquity, hailed him in a low voice, asking him to do as he had agreed and that damned quick.

"The lieutenant, thinking that something out of the way was going on, obeyed the summons. Cramps fixed the noose around the calf's neck, and cried:

"'Pull away, blast your eyes. My back is almost broke carrying the crittur so far on the land. Give us your strength on the water.'

"The lieutenant obeyed, and Cramps, boosting in the rear, the victim was soon brought on deck. Cramps jumped on board and found both himself and the calf in possession of the lieutenant. Next morning the thief was ordered to shoulder the calf and march to the farmer and ask forgiveness, and take the reward of his sins which was fifty lashes."

So seriously had Midshipman Little been raked with the three grape shot that he was sent home to recover his strength, and he did not rejoin the *Protector* until her second cruise five months later. After taking several prizes between the New England coast and the West Indies, she sailed for Charleston.

One afternoon a sail was sighted to the leeward. "We wore around," says the narrative, "and made sail in chase, found we gained fast upon her and at sunset we could see her hull. When night shut in we lost sight of her. There came over us a heavy cloud with squalls of thunder and lightning and by the flashes we discovered the ship which had altered her course. We hauled our wind in chase and were soon alongside. The next flash of lightning convinced us she was of English colours. We hailed her. She answered 'from Charleston bound to Jamaica,' and inquired where we were from. The first lieutenant shouted back:

"'The *Alliance*, United States frigate.'

"Our men were all at quarters and lanterns burning at every port. Our captain told him to haul down his colours, and heave to. There was no answer. We fired three twelve pounders. He called out and said he had struck. Captain Williams asked why he did not shorten sail and heave to. He replied that his men had gone below and would not come up. Our barge was lowered, a prize crew and master put on board and we took possession of the ship. She proved to be of eight hundred tons burden, with three decks fore and aft carrying twenty-four nine-pounders and manned with eighty men. We ordered her for Boston where she arrived safe."

This handsome capture was achieved by an audacious "bluff," but this cruise of the *Protector* was fated to have a less fortunate ending. A few days later another prize was taken and, lucky for Luther Little, he was put aboard as prizemaster. While he was waiting in company with the *Protector* for his orders to proceed, the cruiser sighted another sail and made off in chase. Prizemaster Little tried to follow her until night shut down, and then as she showed no lights he gave up the pursuit and shaped his course for Nantucket. At daylight next morning, the mate who was standing his watch on deck,

went below to inform Skipper Little that two large ships were to the leeward. The latter climbed aloft with his glass and made them out to be British frigates in chase of the *Protector.* They took no notice of the prize a mile to windward of them but pelted hard after the Yankee war ship and when last seen she was in the gravest danger of capture.

Luther Little cracked on sail for Boston with his prize and upon arriving called upon Governor John Hancock and told him in what a perilous situation he had left the *Protector.* Ten days later the news came that the cruiser had been taken by the *Roebuck* and *Mayday* frigates and carried into New York.

Luther Little, having escaped with the skin of his teeth, forsook the service of the United States and like many another stout seaman decided to try his fortune privateering. Captain William Orme, a Salem merchant, offered him the berth of lieutenant aboard the letter of marque brig *Jupiter.* She was a formidable vessel, carrying twenty guns and a hundred and fifty men. From Salem, that wasp's nest of Revolutionary privateersmen, the *Jupiter* sailed for the West Indies. Captain Orme went in his ship, but while he was a successful shipping merchant, he was not quite a dashing enough comrade for so seasoned a sea-dog as this young Luther Little. To the windward of Turk's Island they sighted a large schooner which showed no colors.

"Our boatswain and gunner had been prisoners a short time before in Jamaica," says Lieutenant Little, "and they told Captain Orme that she was the *Lyon* schooner, bearing eighteen guns. Our boatswain piped all hands to quarters and we prepared for action. Captain Orme, not being acquainted with a warlike ship, told me I must take the command, advising me to run from her. I told him in thus doing we should surely be taken. I ordered the men in the tops to take in the studding-sails. We then ran down close to her, luffed, and gave her a

broadside, which shot away both of her topmasts. She then bore away and made sail and ran from us, we in chase. We continued thus for three hours, then came alongside. I hailed and told them to shorten sail or I'd sink them on the spot Our barge was lowered and I boarded her; all this time she had no colours set. I hailed our ship and told Captain Orme I thought her a clear prize, and bade the men prepare to board her. But the captain hailed for the boat to return. I obeyed and told him she had a good many men and several guns. The captain said he would have nothing to do with her, as he feared they might rise upon us. Much to my reluctance we left her."

After having thirty men of the crew violently ill at one time in the fever-stricken harbor of Port au Prince, the letter of marque *Jupiter* was freighted with sugar and coffee and set out for Salem. Dodging two English frigates cruising for prizes in the Crooked Island passage, she passed a small island upon which some kind of signal appeared to be hoisted.

"I was in my hammock quite unwell," relates Lieutenant Little of the *Jupiter*. "The captain sent for me on deck and asked me if I thought a vessel had been cast away on the island. After spying attentively with my glasses, I told him it was no doubt a wreck, and that I could discover men on the island, that probably they were in distress. I advised him to send a boat and take them off. He said the boat should not go unless I went in her. I told him I was too sick, to send Mr. Leach, our mate. He would not listen to me. I went. We landed at the leeward of the island, and walked toward the wreck, when ten men came towards us. They were the captain and crew of the unfortunate vessel. They were much moved at seeing us, said they were driven ashore on the island and had been there ten days without a drop of water. By this time Captain Orme had hove a signal for our return, there being a frigate in chase. Going to the ship the wrecked captain, who

was an old man named Peter Trott, asked me where our vessel was from. I told him we were bound to Salem, and he was quite relieved, fearing we were an English man-of-war. We came alongside and the boat was hoisted up and every sail set, the frigate in chase. She gained upon us and at dark was about a league astern. The clouds were thick and I told the captain we were nearly in their power, our only chance being to square away and run to the leeward across the Passage, it being so thick that they could not discover us with their night glasses. We lay to until we thought the frigate had passed, made sail toward morning, and fetched through the Passage."

After this voyage Luther Little became captain of a large brig which had a roundhouse and was steered by a wheel which was uncommon for merchantmen in those days. He had one terrific winter passage home from the West Indies, fetched up off the Massachusetts coast with every man of his crew but one helplessly frozen, and his vessel half full of water. With his one lone seaman he was blown off to sea, and at length ran his water-logged craft ashore on the Maine coast. Nothing daunted, he worked her down to Boston, after being frozen up and adrift in ice, and sending ashore for men to help him pump out his hold.

"Here at this era of my life, the wheel of fortune turned," he makes comment. "The last seventeen years had been spent mostly on the wide waters. I had passed through scenes at which the heart shrinks as memory recalls them; but now the scene changed. Ill luck was ended."

Thereafter Captain Luther Little continued in the West India trade until he had made twenty-four successful voyages. "always bringing back every man, even to cook and boy." After this he shifted to the commerce with Russia, making six yearly voyages to St. Petersburg at a time when the American flag was almost unknown in that port.

"During one of these voyages," he recounts, "when off Norway in a cold snow storm lying to, a man on the main yard handling the mainsail fell overboard, went under the vessel, and came up on the lee side. I was then on the quarterdeck, caught a hen coop, and threw it into the ocean. He succeeded in getting hold of it. I then ordered topsails hove aback, and to cut away the lashings of the yawl. The man not being in sight I ordered the boat to pull to windward. They succeeded in taking him and brought him on board. He was alive though unable to speak or stand. I had him taken into the cabin, and by rubbing and giving him something hot, he was soon restored to duty. I asked him what he thought his fate would be when overboard. He said that he tried the hen coop lying to and found that would not answer. Then he thought he would try it scudding, and 'sir,' he answered, 'if you had not sent your boat just as you did, I should have borne away for the coast of Norway.'"

When his sea life ended at the age of forty-one, Captain Luther Little could say with a very worthy pride:

"In all my West India and Russian voyaging I never lost a man, never carried away a spar, nor lost a boat or anchor."

In 1799, before the opening of the nineteenth century, this sturdy Yankee seaman, Luther Little, was ready to retire to his ancestral farm in Marshfield where his great-grandfather had hewn a home in the wilderness. In the prime of his vigor and capacity, having lived a dozen lives afloat, he was content to spend forty-odd years more as a New England farmer. And in his eighty-fifth year this old-fashioned American sailor and patriot still sunny and resolute, was able to sit down and describe the hazards through which he had passed just as they are here told.

# CHAPTER VII

## RICHARD DERBY AND HIS SON JOHN

## (1774–1792)

THE first armed resistance to British troops in the American colonies was made at Salem and led by Captain Richard Derby of the third generation of the most notable seafaring family in this country's annals. Born in 1712, he lived through the Revolution, and his career as a shipmaster, merchant and patriot covered the greater part of the American maritime history of the eighteenth century. Until 1757, when he retired from active service on the sea, his small vessels of from fifty to one hundred tons burden were carrying fish, lumber and provisions to the West Indies and fetching home sugar, molasses, cotton, rum and claret, or bringing rice and naval stores from Carolina. With the returns from these voyages, assorted cargoes were laden for voyages to Spain and Madeira and the proceeds remitted in bills on London, or in wine, salt, fruit, oil, lead and handkerchiefs to America.

Captain Richard Derby's vessels ran the gauntlet of the privateers during the French War from 1756 to 1763, and their owner's letters to his London agents describe them as mounting from eight to twelve cannon, mostly six-pounders, "with four cannon below decks for close quarters." Accustomed to fighting his way where he could not go peaceably, Richard Derby and the men of his stamp whose lives and fortunes were staked on the high seas, felt the fires of their resentment against

England wax hotter and hotter as her shipping laws smote their interests with increasing oppression.

In fact, the spirit of independence and protest against interference by the mother country had begun to stir in the seaport towns a full century before the outbreak of armed revolution. It is recorded in Salem annals that "when it was reported to the Lords of Plantations that the Salem and Boston merchants' vessels arrived daily from Spain, France, Holland, and the Canaries (in 1763) which brought wines, linens, silks and fruits, and these were exchanged with the other colonies for produce which was carried to the aforesaid kingdoms without coming to England, complaint was made to the Magistrates that these were singular proceedings. Their reply was 'that they were His Majesty's Vice-Admirals in those seas and *they would do that which seemed good to them.*'"

The spirit of those "Vice Admirals" who proposed to do what seemed good to them continued to flourish and grow bolder in its defiance of unjust laws, and the port of Salem was primed and ready for open rebellion long before that fateful April day at Lexington and Concord. In 1771, four years before the beginning of the Revolution, the Salem *Gazette* published on the first anniversary of the "Boston Massacre," the following terrific proclamation framed in a border of black in token of mourning:

"As a Solemn and Perpetual Memorial:

"Of the Tyranny of the British Administration of Government in the years 1768, 1769, and 1770;

"Of the fatal and destructive Consequences of Quartering Armies, in Time of Peace, in populous cities;

"Of the ridiculous Policy and infamous Absurdity of supporting *Civil Government by a Military Force.*

"Of the Great Duty and Necessity of firmly opposing Despotism at its first Approaches;

"Of the detestable Principles and arbitrary Conduct of those *Ministers* in Britain who advised, and of their *Tools* in America who desired the Introduction of a Standing Army in this Province in the year 1768;

"Of the irrefragible Proof which those ministers themselves thereby produced, that the Civil Government, as by them Administered, was weak, wicked, and tyrannical;

"Of the vile Ingratitude and abominable Wickedness of every American who abetted and encouraged, either in Thought, Word or Deed, the establishment of a Standing Army among his Countrymen;

"Of the unaccountable Conduct of those *Civil Governors*, the immediate Representatives of His Majesty, who, while the *Military* was triumphantly insulting the whole Legislative Authority of the State, and while the blood of the Massacred Inhabitants was flowing in the Streets, persisted in repeatedly disclaiming all authority of relieving the People, by any the least removal of the Troops:

"And of the Savage cruelty of the Immediate Perpetrators:

"*Be it forever Remembered*

"That this day, The Fifth of March, is the Anniversary of Boston Massacre in King St. Boston, New England, 1770.

"In which Five of his Majesty's Subjects were slain and six wounded, By the Discharge of a number of Muskets from a Part of Soldiers under the Command of Capt. Thomas Preston,

"God Save the People!

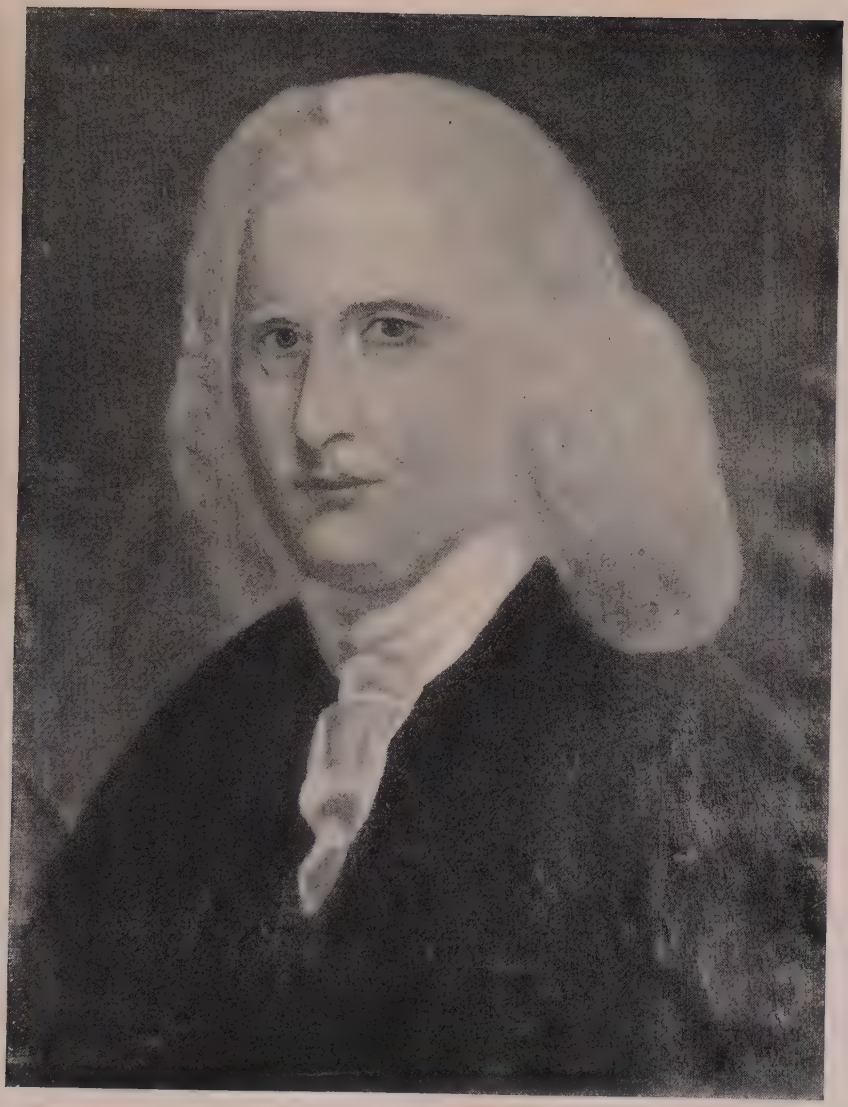
"Salem, March 5, 1771."

The fuse was laid to the powder by the arrival of Lieutenant General Thomas Gage as the first military governor of Massa-

chusetts in May, 1774. He at once moved the seat of government from Boston to Salem which was the second town in importance of the colony, and Salem began to exhibit symptoms of active hostility. Gage's change of administrative headquarters was accompanied by two companies of the Sixty-fourth Regiment of the line, Colonel Alexander Leslie, which were encamped beyond the outskirts of the town. The presence of these troops was a red rag to the people of Salem, and furthermore, Gage outraged public opinion by proposing to choose his own councillors, which appointments had been previously conceded to the Provincial Assembly. A new Act of Parliament, devised to suit the occasion, eliminated the councillors who had been named by the Assembly or General Court, and Gage adjourned this body, then in session in Boston, and ordered it to reconvene in Salem on June 7th.

When the Assembly met in Salem it passed a resolution protesting against its removal from Boston, and acted upon no other political measures for ten days when the House adopted a resolution appointing as delegates to the Congress at Philadelphia, James Bowdoin, Thomas Cushing, Samuel Adams, John Adams, and Robert Treat Paine "to consult upon measures for the restoration of harmony between Great Britain and the Colonies." This action angered General Gage, and he at once prepared a proclamation dissolving the General Court. His secretary posted off to the Salem "town house" to deliver said proclamation, but he was refused admittance, word being brought out to him that the "orders were to keep the door fast." Therefore the defeated secretary read the document to the curious crowd outside and afterwards in the empty council chamber. So ended the last Provincial Assembly of Massachusetts under a British Governor.

Having moved his headquarters to Salem, General Gage let it be known that he regarded the odious Boston Port Bill as a



Richard Derby

measure which must be maintained by military law and an army of twenty thousand men if needs be. He also suppressed the town meetings, appointed new councillors, and heaped up other grievances with such wholesale energy that Salem flew up in arms and defied him. A town meeting had been called for August 24th to choose delegates to a county convention, and the people of the town refused to harken unto the order prohibiting their most jealously guarded institution of local government, the town meeting. Gage hurried back from Boston, took command of his troops, and ordered the Fifty-ninth Regiment of foot to make ready for active service. It is recorded that he showed "Indecent passion, denounced the meeting as treasonable and spoke with much vehemence of voice and gesture, threatened the committee of the town whom he met at the house of Colonel Brown, and ordered up his troops."

The citizens thereupon held a meeting in the open air, chose their delegates to the county convention, and dispersed. Timothy Pickering, afterwards Washington's Secretary of War, and other members of the Committee were placed under arrest for their part in this town meeting. Before nightfall of the same day three thousand men of Salem and nearby towns had armed themselves with muskets and were ready to march to the rescue if their town meeting should be further molested, or British troops employed to enforce any further punishments.

General Gage had declared with an oath that he would transport every man of the Committee, and the "embattled farmers" and sailors feared lest these fellow townsmen of theirs might be carried on board the frigate *Scarboro* which was making ready to sail for England. An express rider was sent out from Boston at midnight to carry the warning of the proposed sailing of this man-of-war, and with the threat of transportation bracing their resolution, the men of Salem replied that "they were ready to receive any attacks they might be exposed to for acting in

pursuance to the laws and interests of their country, as becomes men and Christians."

The issue was not forced by General Gage and having made a failure of the campaign and a blunder of the transfer of the seat of government he returned to Boston with his troops in September. In February of the following year, 1775, he was informed that the Provincial Congress had stored a large amount of munitions and a number of cannon in Salem, and he ordered Colonel Leslie to embark in a transport with a battalion of infantry, disembark at Marblehead, march across to Salem and seize this material of war. These troops, two hundred and fifty strong, sailed from Boston at night and landed on the Marblehead beach Sunday afternoon. Major Pedrick, a patriot of the town, at once mounted a horse and galloped to Salem, two miles away, to carry warning of this invasion. The British infantry marched along the turnpike until they came to the North River, a small, navigable stream making up from Salem Harbor. This was spanned by a drawbridge, and Colonel Leslie was much disturbed to find the drawbridge raised and a formidable assemblage of Salem citizens buzzing angrily at the farther side of the stream. The British officer had no orders to force the passage, and the situation was both delicate and awkward in the extreme. Timothy Pickering had been chosen colonel of the First Regiment of militia and forty of his armed men were mustered, drawn up ready to fire at the order. Colonel Leslie threatened to let loose a volley of musketry to clear the road, and was told by Captain John Felt of Salem:

"You had better not fire, for there is a multitude, every man of whom is ready to die in this strife."

Some of the more adventurous patriots climbed to the top of the raised drawbridge and hurled insulting taunts at the British infantry, yelling "Fire and be damned to you." Rev. Thomas Barnard of the North Church tried to make peace and addressed

Colonel Leslie: "You cannot commit this violation against innocent people, here on this holy day, without sinning against God and humanity. Let me entreat you to return."

At the head of the crowd of armed men of Salem stood Captain Richard Derby. He owned eight of the nineteen cannon which had been collected for the use of the Provincial Congress and he had not the slightest notion of surrendering them. There was a parley while Colonel Leslie argued that he was in lawful use of the King's highway. The Salem rejoinder was to the effect that the road and the bridge were private property to be taken from them only by force and under martial law. At this juncture, when bloody collision seemed imminent, Captain Richard Derby took command of the situation, and roared across the stream, as if he were on his own quarterdeck:

"Find the cannon if you can. Take them if you can. They will never be surrendered."

A fine portrait of this admirable old gentleman has been preserved, and in a well-powdered wig, with a spyglass in his hand, he looks every inch the man who hurled this defiance at Great Britain and dared a battalion of His Majesty's foot to knock the chip off his stalwart shoulder. Colonel Leslie made a half-hearted attempt to set his men across the river in boats, and it was at this time that the only casualty occurred, a Salem man, Joseph Whicher, receiving a bayonet thrust. Meanwhile the Marblehead regiment of patriot militia had been mustered under arms, and the Minute Men of Danvers were actually on the march toward the North River bridge. Perceiving that to force a passage meant to set the whole colony in a blaze, and unwilling to shoulder so tremendous a responsibility without orders from General Gage, the British colonel delayed for further discussion. At length Captain Derby and his friends proposed that in order to satisfy Colonel Leslie's ideas of duty and honor, he should be permitted to cross the bridge and immedi-

ately thereafter return whence he came. This odd compromise was accepted, and after marching to the farther side of the river the troops faced about and footed back to their transport at Marblehead, without finding the cannon they had come out to take. It was a victory for Captain Richard Derby and his townsmen and well worth a conspicuous place in the history of the beginnings of the American Revolution.

Another prominent figure in this tremendously dramatic situation was Colonel David Mason, a veteran soldier who had commanded a battery in the French War in 1756–7, and a scientist of considerable distinction who had made discoveries in electricity of such importance that he was requested to journey to Philadelphia to discuss them with Doctor Franklin. Colonel Mason was a man of great public spirit and patriotism, and in November, 1774, he had received an appointment as Engineer from the "Massachusetts Committee of Safety," which was the first military appointment of the Revolutionary War. He was from this time actively engaged in collecting military stores for the use of his country and making secret preparation for the approaching contest with England. He had obtained from Captain Derby the cannon which Colonel Leslie wished to confiscate and had given them to a Salem blacksmith to have the iron work for the carriages made and fitted.

Colonel Mason resided near the North Bridge and Doctor Barnard's church. When he heard the British troops were drawing near he ran into the North Church and disrupted the afternoon service by shouting at the top of his voice: "The regulars are coming and are now near Malloon's Mills." He and others in authority among their fellow-townsmen tried to control the hotheads and avert hostilities. But the task was made difficult by defiant patriots who bellowed across the drawbridge:

"Soldiers, red jackets, lobster coats, cowards, damn your government."

A high-spirited dame, Sarah Tarrant by name, poked her head out of a window of her cottage overlooking the scene and shrilly addressed the British colonel:

"Go home and tell your master he has sent you on a fool's errand, and broken the peace of our Sabbath. What? Do you think we were born in the woods to be frightened by owls? Fire at me if you have the courage, but I doubt it."

John Howard of Marblehead, who was one of the militia men under arms, stated in his recollections of the affair at the North Bridge that there were eight military companies in Marblehead at that time, comprising nearly the whole male population between sixteen and sixty years of age. They were all promptly assembled under Colonel Orne, to the number of a thousand men. Their orders were "to station themselves behind the houses and fences along the road prepared to fall upon the British on their return from Salem, if it should be found that hostile measures had been used by them; but if it should appear that no concerted act of violence upon the persons or property of the people had been committed, they were charged not to show themselves, but to allow the British detachment to return unmolested to their transport."

The episode was taken seriously in England as shown by an item in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of London of April 17, 1775, which reported: "By a ship just arrived at Bristol from America, it is reported that the Americans have hoisted the standard of liberty at Salem."

William Gavett of Salem wrote an account of the affair of which he was an eye-witness and described certain lively incidents as follows:

"One David Boyce, a Quaker, had gone out with his team to assist in carrying the guns out of reach of the troops, and they were conveyed to the neighborhood of what was then called Buffum's hill, to the northwest of the road leading to Danvers

and near the present estate of Gen. Devereux. My father looked in between the platoons, as I heard him tell my mother, to see if he could recognize any of the soldiers who had been stationed at Fort William on the Neck, many of whom were known to him, but he could discover no familiar faces and was blackguarded by the soldiers for his inquisitiveness, who asked him, with oaths, what he was looking after. The northern leaf of the draw was hoisted when the troops approached the bridge, which prevented them from going any further. Their commander (Col. Leslie) then went upon West's, now Brown's, wharf, and Capt. John Felt followed him. He then remarked to Capt. Felt, or in his hearing, that he should be obliged to fire upon the people on the northern side of the bridge if they did not lower the leaf. Capt. Felt told him if the troops did fire they would be all dead men, or words to that effect. It was understood afterwards that if the troops fired upon the people, Capt. Felt intended to grapple with Col. Leslie and jump into the river, for said he, 'I would willingly be drowned myself to be the death of one Englishman.' Mr. Wm. Northey, observing the menacing attitude assumed by Capt. Felt, now remarked to him, 'don't you know the danger you are in opposing armed troops, and an officer with a drawn sword in his hand?' The people soon commenced scuttling two gondolas which lay on the western side of the bridge and the troops also got into them to prevent it. One Joseph Whicher, the foreman in Col. Sprague's distillery, was at work scuttling the Colonel's gondola, and the soldiers ordered him to desist and threatened to stab him with their bayonets if he did not—whereupon he opened his breast and dared them to strike. They pricked his breast so as to draw blood. He was very proud of this wound in after life and was fond of exhibiting it."

It was a son of this Captain Richard Derby who carried to England the first news of the Battle of Lexington in the swift

From a painting by Lewis J. Bridgman

"Leslie's Retreat," North Bridge, Salem, Mass., February 26, 1775

schooner *Quero*, as the agent of the Provincial Congress. No American's arrival in London ever produced so great a sensation as did that of this Salem sailor, Captain John Derby, in May, 1775. He reached England in advance of the king's messenger dispatched by General Gage, and startled the British nation with the tidings of the clash of arms which meant the loss of an American empire.

Three days after the fight at Lexington, the Provincial Congress met at Concord, and appointed a committee "to take depositions *in perpetuam*, from which a full account of the transactions of the troops under General Gage in the route to and from Concord on Wednesday last may be collected to be sent to England by the first ship from Salem."

Captain Richard Derby was a member of this Congress, and he offered his fast schooner *Quero* of sixty-two tons for this purpose, his son Richard, Jr., to fit her out, and his son John to command her for this dramatic voyage. Old Captain Richard, hero of the North River bridge affair, was a sturdy patriot and a smart seaman. He knew his schooner and he knew his son John, and the news would get to England as fast as sail could speed it.

General Gage had sent his official messages containing the news of the Lexington fight by the "Royal Express-packet" *Sukey*, which sailed on April 24th. Captain John Derby in the *Quero* did not get his sailing orders from the Provincial Congress until three days later, on April 27th. These orders read as follows:

"*Resolved:* that Captain Derby be directed and he hereby is directed to make for Dublin, or any other good port in Ireland, and from thence to cross to Scotland or England, and hasten to London. This direction is given so that he may escape all enemies that may be in the chops of the Channel to stop the

communication of the Provincial Intelligence to the agent. He will forthwith deliver his papers to the agent on reaching London.

"J. WARREN, Chairman.

"P. S.—You are to keep this order a profound secret from every person on earth."

The letter which Captain John Derby carried with his dispatches read as follows:

"IN PROVINCIAL CONGRESS, WATERTOWN,

"APRIL 26, 1775.

"TO THE HON. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, ESQ., LONDON:

"SIR: From the entire confidence we repose in your faithfulness and abilities, we consider it for the happiness of this Colony that the important trust of agency for it, on this day of unequalled distress, is devolved on your hands; and we doubt not your attachment to the cause of the liberties of mankind will make every possible exertion in our behalf a pleasure to you, although our circumstances will compel us often to interrupt your repose by matters that will surely give you pain. A single instance hereof is the occasion of the present letter; the contents of this packet will be our apology for troubling you with it. From these you will see how and by whom we are at last plunged into the horrours of a most unnatural war. Our enemies, we are told, have despatched to Great Britain a fallacious account of the tragedy they have begun; to prevent the operation of which to the publick injury, we have engaged the vessel that conveys this to you as a packet in the service of this Colony, and we request your assistance in supplying Captain Derby, who commands her, with such necessaries as he shall want, on the credit of your constituents in Massachusetts Bay. But we most ardently wish that the several papers herewith enclosed may be immediately printed and dispersed through every Town in England, and especially communicated to the Lord Mayor,

Aldermen, and Common Council of the City of London, that they may take such order thereon as they may think proper, and we are confident your fidelity will make such improvement of them as shall convince all who are not determined to be in everlasting blindness, that it is the united efforts of both Englands that must save either. But whatever price our brethren in one may be pleased to put on their constitutional liberties, we are authorized to assure you that the inhabitants of the other, with the greatest unanimity, are inflexibly resolved to sell theirs only at the price of their lives.

"Signed by order of the Provincial Congress,

"Jos. Warren, President *pro tem.*"

John Derby cracked on sail like a true son of his father, and made a passage across the Atlantic of twenty-nine days, handsomely beating the lubberly "Royal-Express packet" *Sukey*, which had sailed from Boston four days ahead of him. It is supposed that he made a landing at the Isle of Wight, went ashore alone, and hurried to London as fast as he could. The tidings he bore were too alarming and incredible to be accepted by the statesmen and people of Great Britain. Nothing had been heard from General Gage and here was an audacious Yankee skipper, dropped in from Heaven knew where, spreading it broadcast that the American colonists were in full revolt after driving a force of British regulars in disastrous rout. From the office of the Secretary of State, Lord Dartmouth issued this skeptical statement, May 30th:

"A report having been spread and an account having been printed and published, of a skirmish between some people of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, and a detachment of His Majesty's troops, it is proper to inform the publick that no advices have as yet been received in the American Department of any such event. There are reasons to believe that there are

dispatches from General Gage on Board the *Sukey*, Captain Brown, which though she sailed four days before the vessel that brought the printed accounts, is not arrived."

On the following day, Hutchinson, who had preceded Gage as Governor of Massachusetts, wrote from London to his son in Boston:

"Captain Darby, in ballast arrived at Southampton from Marblehead the 27, and came to London the next evening. I am greatly distressed for you. Darby's own accounts confirm many parts of the narrative from the Congress, and they that know him say he deserves credit and that he has a good character; but I think those people would not have been at the expense of a vessel from Marblehead or Salem to England for the sake of telling the truth."

On June 1st, Lord Dartmouth wrote General Gage as follows:

"WHITEHALL, 1st June, 1775.

"SIR: Since my letter to you of 27th ult. an account has been printed here, accompanied with depositions to verify it, of skirmishes between a detachment of the troops under your command and different bodies of the Provincial Militia.

"It appears upon the fullest inquiry that this account, which is chiefly taken from a Salem newspaper, has been published by a Capt. Darby, who arrived on Friday or Saturday at Southampton in a small vessel in ballast, directly from Salem, and from every circumstance, relating to this person and the vessel, it is evident he was employed by the Provincial Congress to bring this account, which is plainly made up for the purpose of conveying every possible prejudice and misrepresentation of the truth.

"From the answers he has given to such questions as has been asked, there is the greatest probability that the whole amounts to no more than that a Detachment, sent by you to destroy

Cannon and Stores collected at Concord for the purpose of aiding Rebellion, were fired upon, at different times, by people of the Country in small bodies from behind trees and houses, but that the party effected the service they went upon, and returned to Boston, and I have the satisfaction to tell you that, the affair being considered in that light by all discerning men, it has had no other effect here than to raise that just indignation which every honest man must feel at the rebellious conduct of the New England Colonies. At the same time it is very much to be lamented that we have not some account from you of the transaction, which I do not mention from any supposition that you did not send the earliest intelligence of it, for we know from Darby that a vessel with dispatches sailed four days before him. We expect the arrival of that vessel with great impatience, but 'till she arrives I can form no decisive judgment of what has happened, and therefore can have nothing more to add but that I am, &c., DARTMOUTH."

Alas for British hopes and fears, the eagerly awaited arrival of the *Sukey* confirmed the disastrous news revealed by Captain John Derby, as may be learned from the following article in *The London Press:*

"TO THE PUBLICK.

"LONDON, June 12, 1775.

"When the news of a massacre first arrived, the pensioned writer of the *Gazette* entreated the publick 'to suspend their judgment, as Government had received no tidings of the matter.' It was added that there was every reason to expect the despatches from General Gage, by a vessel called the *Sukey.* The publick have suspended their judgment; they have waited the arrival of the *Sukey;* and the humane part of mankind have wished that the fatal tale related by Captain Derby might prove altogether fictitious. To the great grief of every thinking man,

this is not the case. We are now in possession of both the accounts. The Americans have given their narrative of the massacre; the favorite servants have given a Scotch account of the skirmish. In what one material fact do the two relations, when contrasted with each other, disagree? The Americans said 'that a detachment of the King's Troops advanced toward Concord; that they attempted to secure two bridges on different roads beyond Concord; that when they reached Lexington they found a body of Provincials exercising on a green; that on discovering the Provincial militia thus employed, the King's Troops called out to them to disperse, damned them for a parcel of rebels, and killed one or two, as the most effectual method intimidating the rest.' This the writer of the Scotch account in the *Gazette* styles, 'marching up to the rebels to inquire the reason of being so assembled.' Both relations, however, agree in this, that a question was asked; the pensioned varnisher only saying that it was asked in a civil way, attended with the loss of blood.

"Thus far, then, the facts, in every material circumstance, precisely agree; and as yet, we have every reason to believe that the *Salem Gazette* is to the full as authentick as our Government paper, which, as a literary composition, is a disgrace to the Kingdom.

"The *Salem Gazette* assured us that the King's Troops were compelled to return from Concord; that a handful of militia put them to rout, and killed and wounded several as they fled. Is this contradicted in the *English Gazette?* Quite the contrary; it is confirmed. The Scotch account of the skirmish acknowledges that 'on the hasty return of the troops from Concord, they were very much annoyed, and several of them were killed and wounded.' The Scotch account also adds 'that the Provincials kept up a scattering fire during the whole of the march of the King's Troops of fifteen miles, by which means several of

them were killed and wounded.' If the American Militia 'kept up a scattering fire on the King's Troops, of fifteen miles,' the Provincials must have pursued, and the regulars must have fled, which confirms the account given in the *Salem Gazette*, wherein it is asserted that the Regulars 'were forced to retreat.' Whether they marched like mutes at a funeral, or whether they fled like the relations and friends of the present ministry who were amongst the rebel army at the battle of Cullodon, is left entirely to the conjecture of the reader; though it should seem that a scattering fire, poured in upon a retreating enemy for fifteen miles together, would naturally, like goads applied to the sides of oxen, make them march off as fast as they could."

The newspaper account which Captain Derby carried to London was printed in *The Essex Gazette* of the issue of "from Tuesday, April 18, to Tuesday, April 25." *The Salem Gazette* had suspended publication the day before the great events of Concord and Lexington, and therefore it was *The Essex Gazette* of Salem which was taken to England, the slight error in the name of the journal being immaterial. This edition of the little four-paged weekly newspaper which shook the British Empire to its foundations, was not made up after the pattern of modern "scarehead" journals. The story of Concord and Lexington was tucked away on an inside page with no headline, title or caption whatever, and was no more than a column long. It may be called the first American war correspondence and no "dispatches from the front" in all history have equaled this article in *The Essex Gazette* as a stupendous "beat" or "scoop," measured by the news it bore and the events it foreshadowed. The *Gazette* carried on its title page the legends, "Containing the freshest advices, both foreign and domestic"; "Printed by Samuel and Ebenezer Hall at their Printing-Office near the Town House."

The article in question read, for the most part, as follows:

"SALEM, April 25.

"Last Wednesday, the 19th of April, the troops of his *Britannick* Majesty Commenced Hostilities upon the People of this Province, attended with circumstances of cruelty not less brutal than what our venerable Ancestors received from the vilest savages of the Wilderness. The Particulars relative to this interesting Event, by which we are involved in all the Horrors of a Civil War, we have endeavoured to collect as well as the present confused state of affairs will admit.

"On Tuesday Evening a Detachment from the Army, consisting, it is said, of 8 or 900 men, commanded by Lieut. Col. Smith, embarked at the Bottom of the Common in Boston, on board a Number of Boats, and landed at Phip's farm, a little way up Charles River, from whence they proceeded with Silence and Expedition, on their way to Concord, about 18 miles from Boston. The People were soon alarmed, and began to assemble, in several towns, before Day-light, in order to watch the Motion of the Troops. At Lexington, 6 miles below Concord, a Company of Militia, of about 100 Men, mustered near the Meeting House; the Troops came in Sight of them just before Sun-rise, and running within a few rods of them, the Commanding Officer accosted the Militia in words to this Effect:

"'*Disperse, you Rebels—Damn you, throw down your Arms and disperse.*'

"Upon which the Troops huzza'd, and immediately one or two Officers discharged their Pistols, which were instantaneously followed by the Firing of 4 or 5 of the Soldiers, and then there seemed to be a general discharge from the whole Body; Eight of our Men were killed, and nine wounded. In a few minutes after this action the Enemy renewed their March for Concord; at which Place they destroyed several Carriages, Carriage

Wheels, and about 20 barrels of Flour; all belonging to the Province. Here about 150 Men going toward a Bridge, of which the Enemy were in Possession, the latter fired and killed 2 of our Men, who then returned the Fire, and obliged the Enemy to retreat back to Lexington, where they met Lord Percy, with a large Reinforcement, with two Pieces of Cannon. The Enemy now having a Body of about 1800 Men, made a Halt, picked up many of their Dead, and took care of their Wounded. At Menotomy, a few of our Men attacked a Party of twelve of the Enemy (carrying stores and Provisions to the Troops), killed one of them, wounded several, made the Rest Prisoners, and took Possession of all their arms, Stores, Provisions, &c., without any loss on our side. The Enemy having halted one or two Hours at Lexington found it necessary to make a second Retreat, carrying with them many of their Dead and Wounded, who they put into Chaises and on Horses that they found standing in the Road. They continued their Retreat from Lexington to Charlestown with great Precipitation; and notwithstanding their Field Pieces, our People continued the Pursuit, firing at them till they got to Charlestown Neck (which they reached a little after Sunset), over which the Enemy passed, proceeded up Bunker Hill, and soon afterward went into the Town, under the protection of the *Somerset* Man of War of 64 guns."

There follows a list of the names of the Provincial Casualities, numbering 38 killed and 19 wounded, with accusations of savage and barbarous behavior on the part of the British troops. The writer then goes on to say:

"I have seen an account of the Loss of the Enemy, said to have come from an officer of one of the Men of War; by which it appears that 63 of the Regulars, and 49 Marines were killed, and 103 of both wounded; in all 215. Lieut. Gould of the 4th

Regiment, who is wounded, and Lieut. Potter of the Marines, and about twelve soldiers, are Prisoners. . . .

"The Public most sincerely sympathize with the Friends and Relations of our deceased Brethren, who gloriously sacrificed their Lives in fighting for the Liberties of their Country. By their noble, intrepid Conduct, in helping to defeat the Forces of an ungrateful Tyrant, they have endeared their Memories to the present generation who will Transmit their Names to Posterity with the highest Honour."

The opposite page of *The Gazette* contained an editorial, or communication, signed "Johannes in Ermo," which Captain John Derby must have enjoyed spreading broadcast in London. It was a battle-hymn in prose, the voice of a free people in arms, indomitable defiance at white-heat. This was the message it flung to the mother country over seas:

"Great Britain, adieu! no longer shall we honour you as our mother; you are become cruel; you have not so much bowels as the sea monsters toward their young ones; we have cried to you for justice, but behold violence and bloodshed! your sword is drawn *offensively*, and the sword of New England *defensively;* by this stroke you have broken us off from you, and effectually alienated us from you. O, Britain, see you to your own house!

"King George the third, adieu! no more shall we cry to you for protection, no more shall we bleed in defense of your person. Your breach of covenant; your violation of faith; your turning a deaf ear to our cries for justice, for covenanted protection and salvation from the oppressive, tyrannical, and bloody measures of the British Parliament, and putting a sanction upon all their measures to enslave and butcher us, have *Dissolved our Allegiance* to your Crown and Government! your sword that ought in *justice to protect* us, is now drawn *with a witness* to destroy us! Oh, George, see thou to thine house!

"General Gage, pluck up stakes and be gone; you have

drawn the sword, you have slain in cool blood a number of *innocent* New England men—you have made the assault—and be it known to you, the *defensive sword* of New England is now drawn, it now studies just revenge; and it will not be satisfied until your blood is shed—and the blood of every son of violence under your command—and the blood of every traitorous *Tory* under your protection; therefore, depart with all your master's forces—depart from our territories, return to your master soon, or destruction will come upon you; every moment you tarry in New England, in the character of your Master's General, you are viewed as an *Intruder*, and must expect to be treated by us as our inveterate enemy.

"O, my dear New England, hear thou the alarm of war! the call of Heaven is to arms! to arms! The sword of Great Britain is drawn against us! without provocation how many of our sons have been fired upon and slain in cool blood, in the cool of the day. . . .

"I beseech you, for God's sake, and for your own sake, watch against every vice, every provocation of God Almighty against us; against intemperance in drinking—against profane language and all debauchery!—and let us all rely on the army of the Most High. . . . "

That after a safe homeward voyage Captain Derby reported to General Washington in person* on the 18th of July, appears from the *Essex Gazette* for that month as follows:

"CAMBRIDGE, July 21.

"Capt. John Derby, who sailed from Salem for London a few Days after the Battle of Lexington, returned last Tuesday,

* (July 18, 1774.) "Captain John Derby who carried to England the tidings of Lexington battle, appears at headquarters in Cambridge and relates that the news of the commencement of the American war threw the people, especially in London, into great consternation, and occasioned a considerable fall of stocks; that many there sympathized with the Colonies." (Felt's Annals of Salem.)

and the same Day came to Head-Quarters in this Place. Very little Intelligence has yet transpired—we only learn, that the News of the Commencement of the American War through the People in England, especially the City of London, into great Consternation, and occasioned a considerable Fall of the Stocks. That the Ministry (knowing nothing of the Battle till they saw it published in the London papers) advertised, in the *Gazette*, that they had received no Account of any Action, and pretended to believe that there had been none. That the Parliament was prorogued two Days before Capt. Derby arrived, but it was said would be immediately called together again. That, when he left London, which was about the 1st of June, no Account of Hostilities had been received by the Ministry from General Gage, notwithstanding the Vessel he dispatched sailed four Days before Capt. Derby. That our friends increased in Number; and that many who had remained neuter in the dispute, began to express themselves warmly in our Favor: That we, however, have no Reason to expect any Mercy from the Ministry, who seem determined to pursue their Measures (long since concerted) for ruining the British Empire.

"Capt. Derby brought a few London Papers, some as late as the 1st of June, but we have not been able to obtain a Sight of them. We are informed they contain very little News, and scarce any Remarks on American Affairs."

It was singularly appropriate that this same Captain John Derby who carried the news to England of the beginning of the American Revolution should have been the shipmaster to carry home to the United States the first tidings of peace in 1783, when he arrived from France in the ship *Astrea* with the message that a treaty had been signed.

This Captain John Derby won a claim to further notice in the history of his times as one of the owners of the ship *Columbia* which sailed from Boston in 1787, circumnavigated the globe,

and on a second voyage discovered and named the mighty Columbia River on the northwest coast of America. The vast territory which includes the states of Oregon, Washington and Idaho was then an unknown and unexplored land, claimed by Spain because her navigators discovered it, by Great Britain because Francis Drake had sailed along the coast in 1759, by Russia because Bering had mapped the North Pacific and prepared for the opening in 1771 of the fur trade from Oregon to China. But no nation had established a foothold in this territory and its extent and natural features were wrapped in mystery.

In 1783, a young American seaman who had sailed with Captain Cook on an exploring voyage of the North Pacific, published a chart and a journal of the voyage, and first brought to the attention of American shipowners the importance of the Northwest fur trade. Ledyard was called an enthusiast, a visionary, until his story attracted the serious consideration of the leading shipping merchants of Boston and Salem. John Derby joined three men of Boston in the venture and the quartette of partners subscribed what was then a huge capital of fifty thousand dollars to equip and despatch a ship to the northwest coast and open an American trade in furs with the Indians.

The *Columbia* was chosen, a ship of two hundred and thirteen tons, small even for that period, mounting ten cannon. Captain John Kendrick was given the command. As consort and tender for coastwise navigation and trade a sloop of ninety tons, the *Lady Washington*, Captain Robert Gray, was fitted out.

Besides the ship's stores, the two vessels carried a cargo of hardware, tools, utensils, buttons, toys, beads, etc., to be bartered with the Indians. The State and Federal Governments granted special letters to the captains, and "hundreds of medals signalizing the enterprise were put aboard for distribution wherever the vessel touched. Years afterward some of these medals and cents and half-cents of the State of Massachusetts were to

be found in the wake of the *Columbia* among the Spaniards of South America, the Kanakas of Hawaii and the Indians of Oregon." *

The two little vessels fared bravely around Cape Horn, and steered north until they reached the fur wilderness country of the great Northwest. After many hardships and thrilling adventures the *Columbia* returned to Boston with a cargo of tea from China. It was a famous voyage in the history of American commercial enterprise, but it brought so little profit to the owners that Captain John Derby and one other partner sold out their shares in the *Columbia*. She was refitted, however, and again sent to the Northwest in 1790 in command of Captain Gray. On this voyage Captain Gray discovered the Columbia River shortly after he had met at sea the English navigator, Vancouver, who reported passing the mouth of a small stream "not worthy his attention." By so close a margin did Vancouver miss the long-sought great river of Oregon, and the chance to claim the Northwestern America for the British flag by right of discovery.

On May 19, 1792, Captain Gray landed with his seamen, after sailing twenty-five miles up the river and formally named it the Columbia. "It has been claimed for many men before and since Marcus Whitman that they saved Oregon to the United States. But surely the earliest and most compelling title to this distinction is that Captain Robert Gray of Boston, and the good ship *Columbia*. They gave us the great river by the powerful right of discovery, and the great river dominated the region through which it ran. . . . The voyage of the *Columbia* was plainly and undeniably the first step which won for the United States a grip on the Oregon territory that no diplomatic casuitry and no arrogant bluster could shake.*

* "The American Merchant Marine," by Winthrop L. Martin.

# CHAPTER VIII

## ELIAS HASKET DERBY AND HIS TIMES

## (1770–1800)

ELIAS HASKET DERBY, the son of Captain Richard Derby, and a brother of Captain John Derby, was the most conspicuous member of this great seafaring family, by reason of his million-dollar fortune, his far-seeing enterprise and his fleet of ships which traded with China, India, Mauritius, Madeira, Siam, Arabia and Europe. He was the first American to challenge the jealous supremacy of the East India, the Holland, the French and the Swedish chartered companies in the Orient. He made of commerce an amazingly bold and picturesque romance at a time when this infant republic was still gasping from the effects of the death grapple of the Revolution. He was born in 1739, went to sea as had his father and his grandfather before him, and like them rose to the command and ownership of vessels while still in his youth. As told in a previous chapter, he was the foremost owner of Salem privateers during the Revolution, and finding the large, swift and heavily manned ship created by the needs of war unfitted for coastwise and West India trade, he resolved to send them in search of new markets on the other side of the globe.

No sooner was peace declared than he was making ready his great ship, the *Grand Turk*, for the first American voyage to the Cape of Good Hope. The *Grand Turk* had been built in 1781 for privateering and as a letter of marque. She was of three hundred tons burden, the largest vessel built in a Salem shipyard until after the Revolution, and Elias Hasket Derby was

proud of her speed, her beauty and her record. During the Revolution she mounted twenty-two guns and fought them handily. On her second cruise as a privateer she captured two rich prizes, took them into Bilboa, and more than paid for herself. Later the *Grand Turk* made several cruises in West India waters and, among other successes, captured a twenty-gun ship, the *Pompey*, from London.

This was the ship with which Elias Hasket Derby blazed a trail toward the Orient, the forerunner of his pioneering ventures to the East Indies. Of the methods and enterprise of Elias Hasket Derby, as typified in such voyages as this of the *Grand Turk*, one of his captains, Richard Cleveland, wrote in his recollections of the methods and enterprise of this typical merchant of his time:

"In the ordinary course of commercial education, in New England, boys are transferred from school to the merchant's desk at the age of fourteen or fifteen. When I had reached my fourteenth year it was my good fortune to be received in the counting house of Elias Hasket Derby of Salem, a merchant who may justly be termed the father of American commerce to India, one whose enterprise and commercial sagacity were unequalled in his day. To him our country is indebted for opening the valuable trade to Calcutta, before whose fortress his was to be the first vessel to display the American flag; and following up the business, he had reaped golden harvests before other merchants came in for a share of them. The first American ships seen at the Cape of Good Hope and the Isle of France belonged to him. His were the first American ships which carried cargoes of cotton from Bombay to China, and among the first ships which made a direct voyage to China and back was one owned by him. Without possessing a scientific knowledge of the construction and sparring of ships, Mr. Derby seemed to have an intuitive faculty in judging of models and

proportions, and his experiments in several instances for the attainment of swiftness in sailing were crowned with success unsurpassed in this or any other country.

"He built several ships for the India trade immediately in the vicinity of the counting house, which afforded me an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the building, sparring and rigging of ships. The conversations to which I listened relating to the countries then newly visited by Americans, the excitement on the return of an adventure from them and the great profits which were made, always manifest from my own little adventures, tended to stimulate the desire in me of visiting those countries, and of sharing more largely in the advantages they presented."

The *Grand Turk*, "the great ship," as she was called in Salem, was less than one hundred feet long, yet she was the first of that noble fleet which inspired a Salem historian, Rev. George Bachelor, to write in an admirable tribute to the town in which his life was passed:

"After a century of comparative quiet, the citizens of this little town were suddenly dispersed to every part of the Oriental world and to every nook of barbarism which had a market and a shore. . . . The reward of enterprise might be the discovery of an island in which wild pepper enough to load a ship might be had almost for the asking, or of forests where precious gums had no commercial value, or spice islands unvexed and unvisited by civilization. Every shipmaster and every mariner returning on a richly loaded ship was the owner of valuable knowledge.

"Rival merchants sometimes drove the work of preparation night and day when virgin markets had favors to be won, and ships which set out for unknown ports were watched when they slipped their cables and sailed away by night, and dogged for months on the high seas in the hope of discovering the secret

well kept by owner and crew. Every man on board was allowed a certain space for a little venture. People in other pursuits, not excepting the merchant's minister, intrusted their savings to the supercargo, and watched eagerly the results of their ventures. This great mental activity, and profuse stores of knowledge brought by every ship's crew, and distributed, together with India shawls, blue china, and unheard of curiosities from every savage shore, gave the community a rare alertness of intellect."

It was the spirit as is herein indicated that achieved its finest flower in such merchants as Elias Hasket Derby. When his ships took their departure from the Massachusetts coast they vanished beyond his ken for one or two years. His captains were intrusted with the disposal of the cargo to the best advantage. There was no sending orders by mail or cable. It was this continual sense of facing unknown hazards, of gambling with the sea and hostile, undiscovered shores that prompted those old shipmasters to inscribe on the title pages of their log books:

"A Journal of an Intended Voyage by God's Assistance . . . Cape Ann bore W.N.W. from whence I take my departure. So God send the good ship to her Desired Port in Safety. Amen."

When the *Grand Turk* made her first voyage to the Cape of Good Hope in 1784, commanded by Captain Jonathan Ingersoll, the scanty navigating equipment of his time is said to have consisted of "a few erroneous maps and charts, a sextant and a Guthrie's Grammar."* The *Grand Turk* made her

*The edition of 1800 of this popular compendium of knowledge bore on the title page: "A New Geographical, Historical and Commercial Grammar and Present State of the Several Kingdoms of the World. Illustrated with a Correct Set of Maps, Engraved from the Most Recent Observations and Draughts of Geographical Travellers. The Eighteenth Edition Corrected and Considerably enlarged. London. 1800."

The work contained "Longitude, Latitude, Bearings and Distances of Principal Places from London" as one of its qualifications for use among mariners.

From a painting made by a Chinese artist at Canton. 1786

The *Grand Turk*, first American ship to touch at the Cape of Good Hope

passage in safety and while she lay in Table Bay, Major Samuel Shaw, an American returning from Canton, sent a boat aboard for Captain Ingersoll and later wrote of this Salem venture:

"The object was to sell, rum, cheese, salt, provisions and chocolate, loaf sugar, butter, etc., the proceeds of which in money with a quantity of ginseng, and some cash brought with him, Captain Ingersoll intended to invest in Bohea tea; but as the ships bound to Europe are not allowed to break bulk on the way, he was disappointed in his expectations of procuring that article and sold his ginseng for two-thirds of a Spanish dollar a pound, which is twenty per cent. better than the silver money of the Cape. He intended remaining a short time to purchase fine teas in the private trade allowed the officers on board India ships, and then to sail to the coast of Guinea, to dispose of his rum, etc., for ivory and gold dust; thence without taking a single slave to proceed to the West Indies and purchase sugar and cotton, with which he would return to Salem. Notwithstanding the disappointment in the principal object of the voyage and the consequent determination to go to the coast of Guinea, his resolution not to endeavor to retrieve it by purchasing slaves did the captain great honor, and reflected equal credit upon his employers, who, he assured me, would rather sink the whole capital employed than directly or indirectly be concerned in so infamous a trade."

The *Grand Turk* returned by way of the West Indies where the sales of his cargo enabled her captain to load two ships for Salem. He sent the *Grand Turk* home in charge of the mate and returned in the *Atlantic*. During the voyage Captain Ingersoll rescued the master and mate of an English schooner, the *Amity*, whose crew had mutinied while off the Spanish Main. The two officers had been cast adrift in a small boat to perish. This was the first act in a unique drama of maritime coincidence.

After the castaways had reached Salem, Captain Duncanson, the English master of the *Amity*, was the guest of Mr. Elias Hasket Derby while he waited for word from his owners and an opportunity to return to his home across the Atlantic. He spent much of his time on the water front as a matter of course, and used to stand at a window of Mr. Derby's counting house idly staring at the harbor.

One day while sweeping the seaward horizon with the office spyglass, the forlorn British skipper let fly an oath of the most profound amazement. He dropped the glass, rubbed his eyes, chewed his beard and stared again. A schooner was making across the bar, and presently she stood clear of the islands at the harbor mouth and slipped toward an anchorage well inside.

There was no mistaking her at this range. It was the *Amity*, his own schooner which had been taken from him in the West Indies, from which he and his mate had been cast adrift by the piratical seamen. Captain Duncanson hurried into Mr. Derby's private office as fast as his legs could carry him. By some incredible twist of fate the captors of the *Amity* had sailed her straight to her captain.

Mr. Derby was a man of the greatest promptitude and one of his anchored brigs was instantly manned with a heavy crew, two deck guns slung aboard, and with Captain Duncanson striding the quarterdeck, the brig stood down to take the *Amity*. It was Captain Duncanson who led the boarders, and the mutineers were soon overpowered and fetched back to Salem jail in irons. The grateful skipper and his mate signed a crew in Salem, and took the *Amity* to sea, a vessel restored to her own by so marvelous an event that it would be laughed out of court as material for fiction.

In November, 1785, the *Grand Turk* was cleared, in command of Captain Ebenezer West for the Isle of France, but her owner had it in his mind, and so instructed his captain, to continue

the voyage to Batavia and China. In June of 1787, she returned to Salem with a cargo of teas, silks, and nankeens; a notable voyage in seas when the American flag was almost unknown. Her successful commerce with Canton lent a slightly humorous flavor to the comment of the *Independent Chronicle* of London, dated July 29, 1785:

"The Americans have given up all thought of a China trade which can never be carried on to advantage without some settlement in the East Indies."

Captain Ebenezer West who took the *Grand Turk* to the Orient on this voyage was a member of so admirable a family of American seamen and shipmasters that the records of the three brothers as written down in the official records of the Salem Marine Society deserves a place in this chapter.

"Captain Nathaniel West was born in Salem, Jan. 31, 1756, and died here December 19, 1851. His elder brother, Ebenezer, and his younger, Edward, as well as himself, were possessed of great energy and enterprise, and all three early selected the ocean for their field of action. Ebenezer was for nearly four years during the Revolution a prisoner of war, and was exchanged shortly before peace was proclaimed. He subsequently had command of E. H. Derby's famous ship, the *Grand Turk*, and in her completed the second voyage by an American vessel to Canton, returning to Salem in 1786.

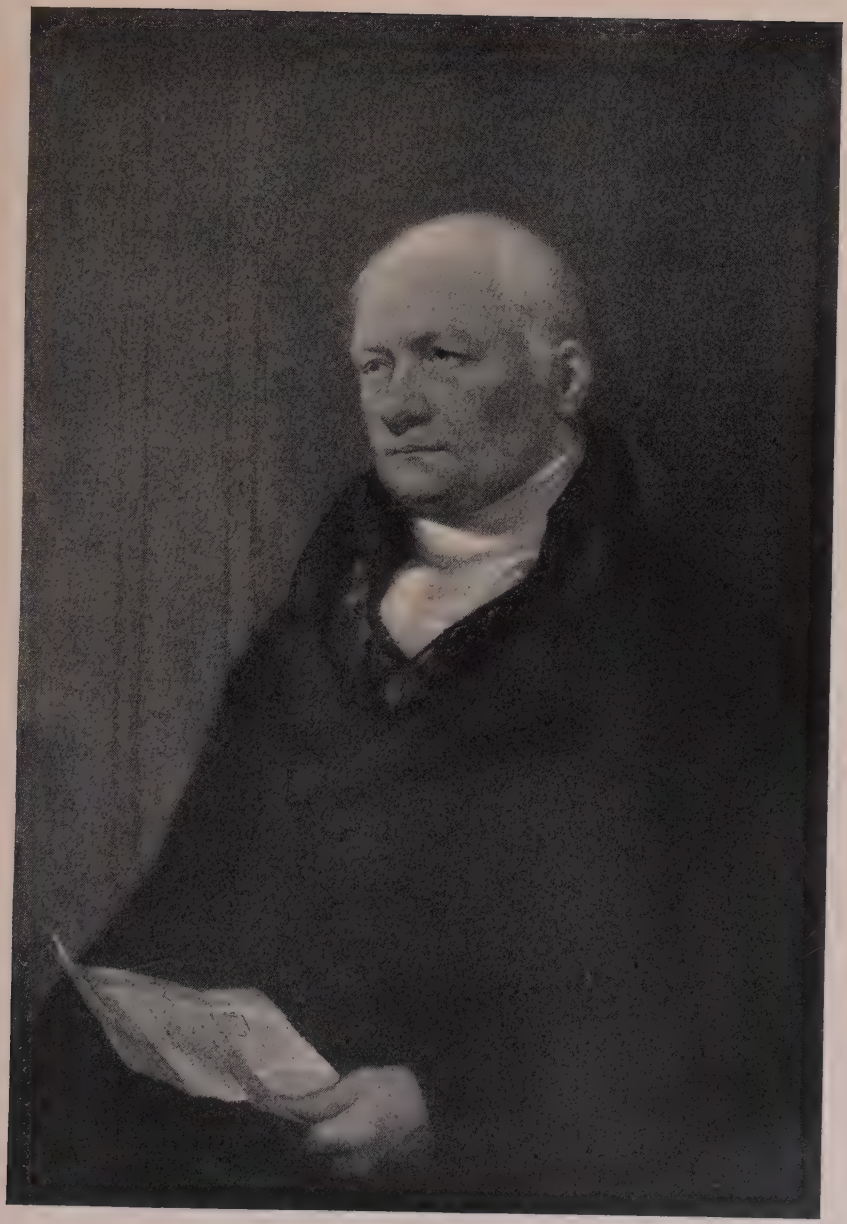
"Capt. Edward West, the youngest, was in command of his brother Nathaniel's ship, *Hercules*, seized in Naples in 1809, and had the good fortune to obtain her release in order to transport Lucien Bonaparte and family to Malta, thus saving his ship from confiscation. He died at Andover, June 22, 1851, six months before his brother Nathaniel, at the age of ninety-one.

"In 1775, Nathaniel, at the age of nineteen, being in command of a merchant vessel in the West India trade, was captured by a British frigate, and was soon recognized by Capt. Gayton, her

commander, as the son of an old friend, and was compelled to serve as midshipman on board a British seventy-four, under the command of Capt. Edwards. Of their personal kindness he often spoke in after life. Being on shore as officer of a press gang, he effected his escape in London, and made his way to Lisbon, where he embarked on board the *Oliver Cromwell*, a Salem privateer of sixteen guns, and returned to this port. On the passage, having been closely pursued for three days, he narrowly escaped being captured by a British frigate. Aware of his impending fate, if taken, he encouraged and stimulated the crew to the use of the sweeps, himself tugging at the oar, and by his energy and incessant diligence was mainly instrumental in saving the ship.

"He made several cruises in the *Oliver Cromwell* and other armed vessels, and took many prizes. He participated with the famous Captain of the privateer *Black Prince*, carrying eighteen guns and one hundred and fifty men. On one occasion, with Capt. Nathaniel Silsbee as his Lieutenant, he put into Cork on a dark night and cut out and took away a valuable prize.

"Capt. West subsequently embarked in commerce and pursued it with continued success until he had amassed a large fortune. He was among the pioneers in various branches of trade, the Northwest, China, East India, etc.—and knew their origin and progress through their various stages. In 1792, he built and despatched the schooner *Patty*, commanded by his brother, Capt. Edward West, and she was the first American vessel to visit Batavia. His ship *Prudent* (in 1805) was among the first of the very few American vessels that visited the Dutch Spice Islands, Amboyna, etc. His ship *Minerva* was the first Salem vessel to circumnavigate the globe, having sailed from here in 1800 for the N. W. coast and China. His ship *Hercules*, under his brother Edward's command, on the conclusion of the war with Great Britain in 1815, was the first vessel to sail from



Nathaniel West

the United States for the East Indies, under the terms of the treaty. The *Hercules*, built for Capt. West in 1805, was a few years since doing good service as a whaler out of New Bedford, and is, we believe, still in existence.

"His age so nearly approximated an hundred years that we may say he flourished during four generations of his race, in the most active and enterprising walks of life. In person, Capt. West was of fine figure, and of a majestic mien and gait. He never forgot the dignity which belonged to his years and station. He was a gentleman of the old school in manners and dress, and adhered with scrupulous tenacity to the costume of his early years. His physical powers were so little impaired, even in his extreme old age, that he was frequently seen driving along in his gig, or walking with vigorous and elastic step, until a very short time before his death; and many of our readers can recall his commanding and dignified appearance in our streets. He united in himself personal frugality, economy, and untiring industry; and his favorite maxim was, 'without these none can be rich, and with these few would be poor.'"

When Mr. Derby decided to push out for a share of the East India commerce he sent his eldest son, Elias Hasket, Jr., to England and the Continent as soon as he was graduated from Harvard College. There the young man remained until he had become a linguist and had made a thorough study of the English and French methods of trade with the Far East. Having laid this thorough foundation for his bold venture, Elias Hasket, Jr., was now sent to India where he lived three years in the interests of his house, and firmly established an immensely profitable trade which for half a century was to make the name of Salem far more widely known in Bombay and Canton than that of New York or Boston. A little later the Derby ship *Astrea* was showing the American flag to the natives of Siam.

How fortunes were won in those brave days may be learned from the record of young Derby's activities while in the Far East. In 1788 the proceeds of one cargo enabled him to buy a ship and a brigantine in the Isle of France (Mauritius) in the Indian Ocean. These two vessels he sent to Bombay to load with cotton. Two other ships of his house, the *Astrea* and the *Light Horse* he filled with cargoes at Calcutta and Rangoon, and sent them home to Salem. Then he returned in still another ship, the brig *Henry*.

When the profit of these several transactions were reckoned it was found that more than $100,000 had been earned by this little fleet above all outlay. Soon after his return young Derby sailed for Mocha, an Arabian port in the Red Sea, to pick up a cargo of coffee. The natives had never heard of America, and the strange vessel was a nine days' wonder.

In 1788 Mr. Derby decided to send a ship for a direct voyage to Batavia, another novel commercial undertaking. While the purely business side of these enterprises is not thrilling, it holds a certain interest as showing the responsibilities of the ship-masters upon whose judgment depended the results of the voyage. For this first American voyage to Batavia, the instructions of the captain and supercargo from the owner, Mr. Derby, read as follows:

"Salem, February, 1789.

"Captain James Magee, Jr.,

"Mr. Thomas Perkins (supercargo)

"Gents: The ship *Astrea* of which James Magee is master and Mr. Thomas Perkins is supercargo, being ready for sea, I do advise and order you to come to sail, and make the best of your way for Batavia, and on your arrival there you will dispose of such part of your cargo as you think may be the most for my interest.

"I think you had best sell a few casks of the most ordinary

ginseng, if you can get one dollar a pound for it. If the price of sugar be low, you will then take into the ship as much of the best white kind as will floor her, and fifty thousand weight of coffee, if it is as low as we have heard—part of which you will be able to stow between the beams and the quintlings, and fifteen thousand of saltpeter, if very low; some nutmegs, and fifty thousand weight of pepper. This you will stow in the fore peak, for fear of its injuring the teas. The sugar will save the expense of any stone ballast and it will make a floor for the teas, etc., at Canton.

"At Batavia you must if possible, get as much freight for Canton as will pay half or more of your charges; that is, if it will not detain you too long, as by this addition of freight it will exceedingly help the voyage. You must endeavor to be the first ship with ginseng, for be assured you will do better alone than you will if there are three or four ships at Canton at the same time with you. . . .

"Captain Magee and Mr. Perkins are to have five per cent. commission for the sales of the present cargo and two and one-half per cent. on the cargo home, and also five per cent. on the profit made on goods that may be purchased at Batavia and sold at Canton, or in any other similar case that may arise on the voyage. They are to have one-half the passage money—the other half belongs to the ship. The privileges of Captain Magee is five per cent. of what the ship carries on cargo, exclusive of adventures. It is ordered that the ship's books shall be open to the inspection of the mates and doctor of the ship, so that they may know the whole business, as in case of death or sickness it may be of good service in the voyage. The Philadelphia beer is put up so strong that it will not be approved of until it is made weaker; you had best try some of it first.

"You will be careful not to break any acts of trade while you are out on the voyage, to lay the ship and cargo liable to seizure,

for my insurance will not make it good. Be very careful of the expense attending the voyage, and remember that a one dollar laid out while absent is two dollars out of the voyage. Pay particular attention to the quality of your goods, as your voyage very much depends on your attention to this. You are not to pay any moneys to the crew while absent from home unless in a case of real necessity, and then they must allow an advance for the money. Annexed to these orders you have a list of such a cargo for my own account as I at present think may do best for me, but you will add or diminish any article as the price may be.

". . . Captain Magee and Mr. Perkins—Although I have been a little particular in these orders, I do not mean them as positive; and you have leave to break them in any part where you by calculation think it for my interest, excepting your breaking Acts of Trade which I absolutely forbid. Not having to add anything, I commit you to the Almighty's protection, and remain your friend and employer,

"Elias Hasket Derby."

The captain was expected to "break his orders in any part," if he could drive a better bargain than his employer had been able to foresee at a distance of ten thousand miles from the market. Merchants as well as navigators, the old-time shipmaster found compensation for these arduous responsibilities in the "privileges" which allowed him a liberal amount of cargo space on their own account, as well as a commission on the sales of the freight out and back. His own share of the profits of two or three voyages to the Far East might enable him to buy and ship and freight a vessel for himself. Thereafter, if he were shrewd and venturesome enough, he rose rapidly to independence and after a dozen years of the quarterdeck was ready to step ashore as a merchant with his own counting house and his fleet of stout ships.

In 1793, Captain Jonathan Carnes of Salem was looking for trade along the Sumatra coast. Touching at the port of Bencoolen, he happened to learn that wild pepper might be found along the northwest coast of Sumatra. The Dutch East India Company was not as alert as this solitary Yankee shipmaster, roaming along strange and hostile shores.

Captain Carnes kept his knowledge to himself, completed his voyage to Salem, and there whispered to a merchant, Jonathan Peele, that as soon as possible a secret pepper expedition should be fitted out. Mr. Peele ordered a fast schooner built. She was called the *Rajah*, and carried four guns and ten men. There was much gossiping speculation about her destination, but Captain Carnes had nothing at all to say. In November, 1795, he cleared for Sumatra and not a soul in Salem except his owner and himself knew whither he was bound. The cargo consisted of brandy, gin, iron, tobacco and dried fish to be bartered for wild pepper.

For eighteen months no word returned from the *Rajah*, and her mysterious quest. Captain Carnes might have been wrecked on coasts whereof he had no charts, or he might have been slain by hostile natives. But Jonathan Peele, having risked his stake, as Salem merchants were wont to do, busied himself with other affairs and pinned his faith to the proven sagacity and pluck of Jonathan Carnes. At last, a string of signal flags fluttered from the harbor mouth. Jonathan Peele reached for his spyglass, and saw a schooner's topsails lifting from seaward. The *Rajah* had come home, and when she let go her anchor in Salem harbor, Captain Jonathan Carnes brought word ashore that he had secured a cargo of wild pepper in bulk which would return a profit of at least seven hundred per cent. of the total cost of vessel and voyage. In other words, this one "adventure" of the *Rajah* realized what amounted to a comfortable fortune in that generation.

There was great excitement among the other Salem merchants. They forsook their desks to discuss this pepper bonanza, but Captain Jonathan Carnes had nothing to say and Mr. Jonathan Peele was as dumb as a Salem harbor clam. The *Rajah* was at once refitted for a second Sumatra voyage, and in their eagerness to fathom her dazzling secret, several rival merchants hastily made vessels ready for sea with orders to go to that coast as fast as canvas could carry them and endeavor to find out where Captain Carnes found his wild pepper. They hurried to Bencoolen, but were unsuccessful and had to proceed to India to fill their holds with whatever cargoes came to hand. Meanwhile the *Rajah* slipped away for a second pepper voyage, and returned with a hundred and fifty thousand pounds of the precious condiment.

There was no hiding this mystery from Salem merchants for long, however, and by the time the *Rajah* had made three pepper voyages, the rivals were at her heels, bartering with native chieftains and stowing their holds with the wild pepper which long continued to be one of the most profitable articles of the Salem commerce with the Orient. It was a fine romance of trade, this story of Captain Carnes and the *Rajah*, and characteristic of the men and methods of the time. For half a century a large part of the pepper used in all countries was reshipped from the port of Salem, a trade which flourished until 1850. During the period between the first voyage of Captain Carnes and 1845, the Salem custom house records bore the entries of almost two hundred vessels from the port of Sumatra.

While Sumatra and China and India were being sought by Salem ships, Elias Hasket Derby in 1796 sent his good ship *Astrea* on a pioneer voyage to Manila. She was the first American vessel to find that port, and was loaded with a rich cargo of sugar, pepper and indigo, on which twenty-four

thousand dollars in duties were paid at the Salem Custom House.

To carry on such a business as that controlled by Elias Hasket Derby, enlisted the activities of many men and industries. While his larger ships were making their distant voyages, his brigs and schooners were gathering the future cargoes for the Orient; voyaging to Gothenburg and St. Petersburg for iron, duck and hemp; to France, Spain and Madeira for wine and lead; to the West Indies for rum, and to New York, Philadelphia and Richmond for flour, provisions, iron, and tobacco. These shipments were assembled in the warehouses of Derby wharf, and paid for in the teas, coffee, pepper, muslin, silks and ivory which the ships from the far East were bringing home. In fourteen years Mr. Derby's ships to the far Eastern ports and Europe made one hundred and twenty-five voyages, and of the thirty-five vessels engaged in this traffic only one was lost at sea.

In one of the most entertaining and instructive chapters of "Walden," Thoreau takes the trouble to explain the business of a successful shipping merchant of Salem. The description of his activities may be fairly applied to Elias Hasket Derby and his times.

"To oversee all the details yourself in person; to be at once pilot and captain, and owner and underwriter; to buy and sell and keep the accounts; to read every letter received, and write or read every letter sent; to superintend the discharge of imports night and day; to be upon many ports of the coast almost at the same time—often the richest freights will be discharged upon a Jersey shore; to be your own telegraph, unweariedly sweeping the horizon, speaking all vessels bound coastwise; to keep up a steady dispatch of commodities for the supply of such a distant and exorbitant market; to keep yourself informed of the state of the markets, prospects of war and peace every-

where, and anticipate the tendencies of trade and civilization. Taking advantage of the results of all exploring expeditions using new passages and all improvements in navigation; charts to be studied, the position of reefs and new lights and buoys to be corrected, for by the error of some calculator the vessel often splits upon a rock that should have reached a friendly pier; universal science to be kept pace with, studying the lives of all great discoverers and navigators, great adventurers and merchants, from Hanno and the Phœnicians down to our day; in fine, account of stock must be taken from time to time, to know how you stand. It is such a labor to task the faculties of a man—such problems of profit and loss, of interest, of tare and tret, and gauging of all kinds in it, as demand a universal knowledge."

There is to-day nothing at all comparable with the community of interests which bound all Salem in a kinship with the sea and its affairs. Every ship for China or India carried a list of "adventures," small speculations entrusted to the captain or supercargo, contributed by boys and girls, sweethearts, brothers, mothers and wives. In the log of Mr. Derby's ship, the *Astrea*, for a voyage to Batavia and Canton are the following "memoranda" of "adventures," which were to be sold by the captain and the profits brought home to the investors:

"Captain Nathaniel West. 15 boxes spermacetti candles. 1 pipe Tenefriffe wine."

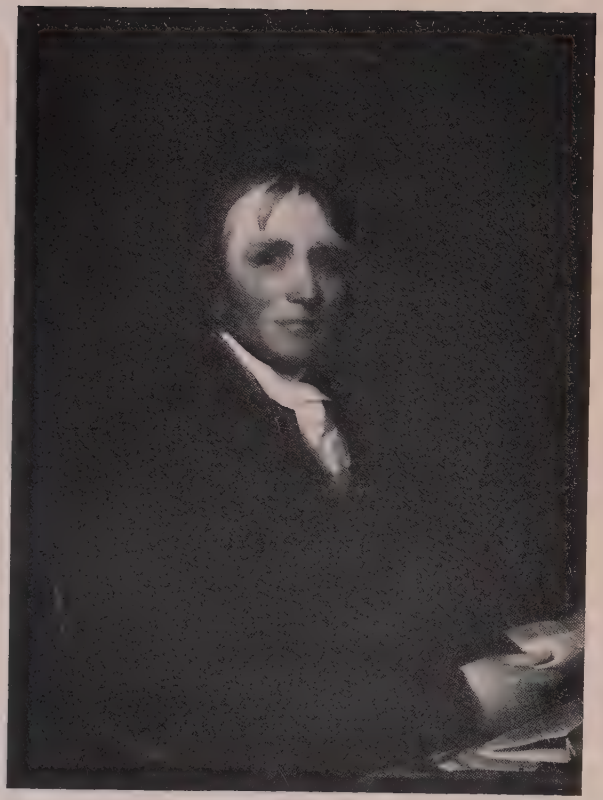
"James Jeffry. 1 cask ginseng."

"George Dodge. 10 Dollars. 1 pipe Madeira wine."

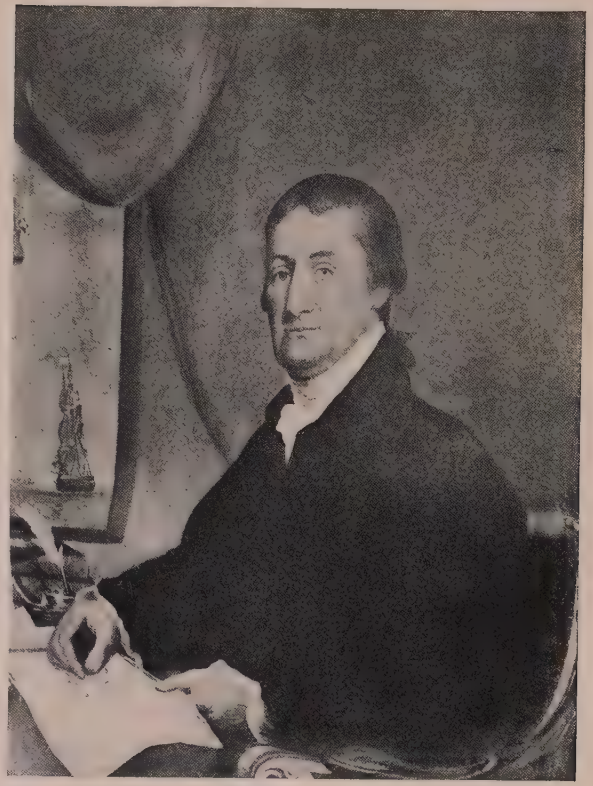
In searching among the old logs for these "adventures," the author found "on board Ship *Messenger* of Salem, 1816":

"Memorandum of Miss Harriet Elkin's Adventure.

"Please to purchase if at Calcutta two net bead with draperies; if at Batavia or any spice market, nutmegs, and mace, or if at



William Gray



Elias Hasket Derby

Canton, Two Canton Crape shawls of the enclosed colors at $5 per shawl. Enclosed is $10. Signed.

"HENRIETTA ELKINS."

"Memorandum of Mr. John R. Tucker's Adventure.

"Mr. C. STANLEY, Sir:

"I hand you a bag containing 100 Spanish dollars for my adventure on board the ship *Messenger* which please invest in coffee and sugar, if you have room after the cargo is on board. If not, invest the amount in nutmegs, or spice as you think best. Please do for me as you do for your own, and oblige your obt.

"JOHN R. TUCKER.

"To EDWARD STANLEY, master."

Captain Stanley kept an itemized record of his transactions with Mr. J. Tucker's one hundred Spanish dollars, and it may be interesting to note how such an "adventure" was handled to reap profits for the waiting speculator in faraway Salem. The captain first bought in Batavia ten bags of coffee for $83.30, which with boat hire, duty and sacking made the total outlay $90.19. This coffee he sold in Antwerp on his way home for $183.75. Arriving at Salem he paid over to Mr. Tucker the sum of $193.57, or almost one hundred per cent. profit on the amount of the "adventure." This is enough to show why this kind of speculative investment was so popular in the Salem of a century ago.

The same ship carried also "Mrs. Mary Townsend's adventure," to wit:

"Please to purchase lay out five dollars which I send by you, Vizt:

"One Tureen 14 by 10 Inches, China. One Nett bead and you will oblige."

Almost every household of Salem had its own menfolk or near kinfolk on the sea, not in the offshore fisheries, nor in the

coastwise trade where the perils of their calling might be somewhat atoned for by the frequent visits of these loved ones. The best and bravest men of Salem were in the deep-water, square-rigged vessels which vanished toward the Orient and to the South Seas to be gone, not months but years on a voyage.

After open hostilities had fairly begun between France and the United States, in 1798, our ports began to send out privateersmen and the merchants' fleets sought refuge. Elias Hasket Derby, with a revival of his bold Revolutionary spirit, decided to risk a cargo of sugar and coffee to meet the urgent demands of the Mediterranean ports. For this particular mission he built the ship *Mount Vernon*, a notable combination of commercial and naval fitness. She was the last venture of this great merchant, and with characteristic enterprise he took the chances of evading the French and the Algerine pirates with a cargo whose profits would be enormous if the *Mount Vernon* could make the passage in safety. This fine ship was only one hundred feet long, but she carried fifty men and twenty guns. She was built for speed as well as fighting ability, and she made Cape Vincent on her outward passage in sixteen days from Salem. Her voyage was a brilliant success, although her owner died before she came home. The *Mount Vernon* on this one voyage paid to the Derby estate a profit of one hundred thousand dollars on a total investment for ship and cargoes of $43,000. The letter book of the *Mount Vernon* for this notable voyage in the history of the American merchant marine tells how she fought her way across the Atlantic. Captain Elias Hasket Derby, junior, was in charge of the vessel, and he wrote his father as follows:

"GIBRALTER, 1st, August, 1799.

"E. H. DERBY, Esq., Salem:

"Honored Sir: I think you must be surprised to find me here so early. I arrived at this port in seventeen and one-half days

from the time my brother left the ship (off Salem). In eight days and seven hours were up with Carvo, and made Cape St. Vincent in sixteen days. The first of our passage was quite agreeable; the latter light winds, calm, and Frenchmen constantly in sight for the last four days. The first Frenchman we saw was off Tercira, a lugger to the southward. Being uncertain of his force, we stood by him to leeward on our course and soon left him.

"July 28th in the afternoon we found ourselves approaching a fleet of upwards of fifty sail, steering nearly N. E. We run directly for their centre; at 4 o'clock found ourselves in their half-moon; concluding it impossible that it could be any other than the English fleet, continued our course for their centre, to avoid any apprehension of a want of confidence in them. They soon dispatched an 18-gun ship from their centre, and two frigates, one from their van and another from the rear to beat towards us, being to windward.

"On approaching the centre ship under easy sail, I fortunately bethought myself that it would be but common prudence to steer so far to windward of him as to be a gunshot's distance from him; to observe his force, and manoevering. When we were abreast of him he fired a gun to leeward and hoisted English colors. We immediately bore away and meant to pass under his quarter, between him and the fleet, showing our American colors. This movement disconcerted him and it appeared to me he conceived we were either an American sloop of war or an English one in distress, attempting to cut him off from the fleet. While we were in the act of wearing on his beam, he hoisted *French* colors and gave us his broadside.

"We immediately brought our ship to the wind and stood on about a mile, wore towards the centre of the fleet, hove about and crossed on him on the other tack about half grape shot distance and received his broadside. Several of his shot fell on

board of us, and cut our sails—two round shot striking us, without much damage. All hands were active in clearing ship for action, for our surprise had been complete.

"In about ten minutes we commenced firing our stern chasers and in a quarter of an hour gave him our broadside in such a style as apparently sickened him, for he immediately luffed in the wind, gave us his broadside, went in stays in great confusion, wore ship afterwards in a large circle, and renewed the chase at a mile and a half distance—a manoever calculated to keep up appearances with the fleet and to escape our shot. We received seven or eight broadsides from him, and I was mortified at not having it in my power to return him an equal number without exposing myself to the rest of the fleet, for I am persuaded I should have had the pleasure of sending him home had he been separate from them.

"At midnight we had distanced them, the chasing rocket signals being almost out of sight, and soon left them. We then kept ourselves in constant preparation till my arrival here; and indeed it had been very requisite, for we have been in constant brushes ever since. The day after we left the (French) fleet we were chased till night by two frigates whom we lost sight of when it was dark. The next morning off Cape St. Vincent in the latitude of Cadiz, were chased by a French lateen-rigged vessel apparently of 10 or 12 guns, one of them an 18-pounder. We brought to, for his metal was too heavy for ours, and his position was to windward, where he lay just in a situation to cast his shot over us, and it was not in my power to put him off. We of course bore away, and saluted him with our long nines. He continued in chase till dark and when we were nearly by Cadiz, at sunset, he made a signal to his consort, a large lugger whom we had just discovered ahead. Having a strong breeze I was determined to pass my stern over him if he did not make way for me. He thought prudent so to do,

The ship *Mount Vernon*, owned by Elias Hasket Derby, in her fight with a French fleet

"At midnight we made the lights in Cadiz city but found no English fleet. After laying to till daybreak, concluded that the French must have gained the ascendency in Cadiz and thought prudent to proceed to this place where we arrived at 12 o'clock, *popping at Frenchmen all the forenoon.* At 10 A.M. off Algeciras Point were seriously attacked by a large latineer who had on board more than 100 men. He came so near our broadside as to allow our six-pound grape to do execution handsomely. We then bore away and gave him our stern guns in a cool and deliberate manner, doing apparently great execution. Our bars having cut his sails considerably he was thrown into confusion, struck both his ensign and his pennant. I was then puzzled to know what to do with so many men; our ship was running large with all her steering sails out, so that we could not immediately bring her to the wind and we were directly off Algeciras Point from whence I had reason to fear she might receive assistance, and my port (Gibralter) in full view.

"These were circumstances that induced me to give up the gratification of bringing him in. It was, however, a satisfaction to flog the rascal in full view of the English fleet who were to leeward. The risk of sending here is great, indeed, for any ship short of our force in men and guns—but particularly heavy guns.

"It is absolutely necessary that two Government ships should occasionally range the straits and latitude of Cadiz, from the longitude of Cape St. Vincent. I have, now while writing to you, two of our countrymen in full view who are prizes to these villains. Lord St. Vincent, in a 50-gun ship bound for England, is just at this moment in the act of retaking one of them. The other goes into Algeciras without molestation.

"You need have but little apprehension for my safety, as my crew are remarkably well trained and are perfectly well disposed to defend themselves; and I think after having cleared our-

selves from the French in such a handsome manner, you may well conclude that we can effect almost anything. If I should go to Constantinople, it will be with a passport from Admiral Nelson for whom I may carry a letter to Naples.

"Your affectionate son,

"ELIAS HASKET DERBY."

That the experience of Captain Elias Hasket Derby, Jr., in the *Mount Vernon* was not an unusual one is indicated by the following letter written by Captain Richard Wheatland and published in a Salem newspaper of 1799 under these stirring headlines:

"*A sea Fight gallantly and vigorously maintained by the Ship Perseverance, Captain Richard Wheatland of this port against one of the vessels of the Terrible Republic. The French Rascals, contrary to the Laws of War and Honor, fought under false colours, whilst the Eagle, true to his charge, spreads his wings on the American flag.*"

"SHIP PERSEVERANCE,

"Old Straits of Bahama, Jan. 1, 1799.

"Dec. 31st. Key Romain in sight, bearing south, distance four or five leagues. A schooner has been in chase of us since eight o'clock, and has every appearance of being a privateer. At one o'clock P.M. finding the schooner come up with us very fast, took in steering sails, fore and aft and royals; at half-past one about ship and stood for her; she immediately tacked and made sail from us. We fired a gun to leeward and hoisted the American ensign to our mizzen peak; she hoisted a Spanish jack at maintop masthead and continued to run from us. Finding she outsailed us greatly, and wishing to get through the Narrows in the Old Straits, at two o'clock P.M. we again about ship and kept on our course. The schooner immediately wore, fired a gun to leeward, and kept after us under a great press of

Elias Hasket Derby mansion (1799–1816)

Prince House. Home of Richard Derby. Built about 1750

sail. At half-past two she again fired a gun to leeward, but perceiving ourselves in the Narrows above mentioned, we kept on to get through them if possible before she came up with us, which we effected.

"At three o'clock finding ourselves fairly clear of Sugar Key and Key Laboas, we took in steering sails, wore ship, hauled up our courses, piped all hands to quarters and prepared for action. The schooner immediately took in sail, hoisted an English Union flag, and passed under our lee at a considerable distance. We wore ship, she did the same and we passed each other within half a musket. A fellow hailed us in broken English and ordered the boat hoisted out and the captain to come on board with his papers, which he refused. He again ordered our boat out and enforced his orders with a menace that in case of refusal he would sink us, using at the same time the vilest and most infamous language it is possible to conceive of.

"By this time he had fallen considerably astern of us; he wore and came up on our starboard quarter, giving us a broadside as he passed our stern, but fired so excessively wild that he did us very little injury, while our stern-chasers gave him a noble dose of round shot and lagrange. We hauled the ship to wind and as he passed poured a whole broadside into him with great success. Sailing faster than we he ranged considerably ahead, tacked and again passed, giving us a broadside and a furious discharge of musketry which they kept up incessantly until the latter part of the engagement.

"His musket balls reached us in every direction, but his large shot either fell short or went considerably over us while our guns loaded with round shot and square bars of iron, six inches long, were plied so briskly and directed with such good judgment that before he got out of range we had cut his mainsail and foretopsail all to rags and cleared his decks so effectively that when he bore away from us there were scarcely ten men

to be seen. He then struck his English flag and hoisted the flag of the Terrible Republic and made off with all the sail he could carry, much disappointed, no doubt, at not being able to give us a fraternal embrace.

"The wind being light and knowing he would outsail us, added to a solicitude to complete our voyage, prevented our pursuing him; indeed we had sufficient to gratify our revenge for his temerity, for there was scarcely a single fire from our guns but what spread entirely over his hull. The action which lasted an hour and twenty minutes, we conceive ended well, for exclusive of preserving the property entrusted to our care, we feel confidence that we have rid the world of some infamous pests of society. We were within musket shot the whole time of the engagement, and were so fortunate as to receive but very trifling injury. Not a person on board met the slightest harm. Our sails were a little torn and one of the quarterdeck guns dismounted.

"The privateer was a schooner of 80 or 90 tons, copper bottom, and fought five or six guns on a side. We are now within forty-eight hours sail of Havana, where we expect to arrive in safety; indeed we have no fear of any privateer's preventing us unless greatly superior in force. The four quarterdeck guns will require new carriages, and one of them was entirely dismounted.

"We remain with esteem,
"Gentlemen,
"Your Humble Servant,
"RICHARD WHEATLAND."

# CHAPTER IX

## PIONEERS IN DISTANT SEAS

(1775-1817)

THE name of Joseph Peabody takes rank with that of Elias Hasket Derby as an American who did much to upbuild the commerce, wealth and prestige of his nation in its younger days. It may sound like an old-fashioned doctrine in this present age of concentration of wealth at the expense of a sturdy and independent citizenship, to assert that such men as Joseph Peabody deserve much more honor for the kind of manhood they helped to foster than for the riches they amassed for themselves. They did not seek to crush competition, to drive out of business the men around them who were ambitious to win a competence on their own merits and to call themselves free citizens of a free country. Those were the days of equal opportunities, which shining fact finds illustration in the career of Joseph Peabody, for example, who, during his career as a ship owner, advanced to the rank of master thirty-five of his fellow townsmen who had entered his employ as cabin boys or seamen. Every one of these shipmasters, "if he had the stuff in him," became an owner of shipping, a merchant with his own business on shore, an employer who was eager, in his turn, to advance his own masters and mates to positions of independence in which they might work out their own careers.

During the early years of the nineteenth century, Joseph Peabody built and owned eighty-three ships which he freighted

on his own account and sent to every corner of the world. The stout square-riggers which flew the Peabody house flag made thirty-eight voyages to Calcutta, seventeen to Canton, thirty-two to Sumatra, forty-seven to St. Petersburg, and thirty to other ports of Europe. To man this noble fleet no fewer than seven thousand seamen signed shipping articles in the counting room of Joseph Peabody. The extent of his commerce is indicated by the amount of duties paid by some of these ships. In 1825 and 1826, the *Leander*, a small brig of two hundred and twenty-three tons, made two voyages to Canton which paid into the Salem Custom House duties of $86,847, and $92,392 respectively. In 1829, 1830, and 1831, the *Sumatra*, a ship of less than three hundred tons, came home from China with cargoes, the duties on which amounted to $128,363; $138,480, and $140,761. The five voyages named, and all of them were made in ships no larger than a small two-masted coasting schooner of to-day, paid in duties a total of almost six hundred thousand dollars.

Typical of the ships which won wealth and prestige for Joseph Peabody, was the redoubtable *George* which was the most successful vessel of her period. For twenty-two years she was in the East India trade, making twenty-one round voyages with such astonishing regularity as to challenge comparison with the schedules of the cargo tramps of to-day. She was only one hundred and ten feet in length, with a beam of twenty-seven feet, but during her staunch career the *George* paid into the United States Treasury as duties on her imports more than six hundred thousand dollars.

She was built in 1814 by a number of Salem ship carpenters who had been deprived of work by the stagnation of the War of 1812. They intended to launch her as a co-operative privateer, to earn her way by force of arms when peaceable merchantmen were driven from the high seas. But the war ended too

soon to permit these enterprising shipwrights to seek British plunder and they sold the *George* to Joseph Peabody. She sailed for India in 1815, with hardly a man in her company, from quarterdeck to forecastle, more than twenty-one years of age. Every man aboard of her could read and write, and most of the seamen had studied navigation.

Not always did these enterprising and adventurous Salem lads return to their waiting mothers. In the log of the *George* for a voyage to Calcutta in 1824, the mate has drawn with pencil a tombstone and a weeping willow as a tribute to one Greenleaf Perley, a young seaman who died in that far-off port. The mate was a poet of sorts and beneath the headstone he wrote these lines:

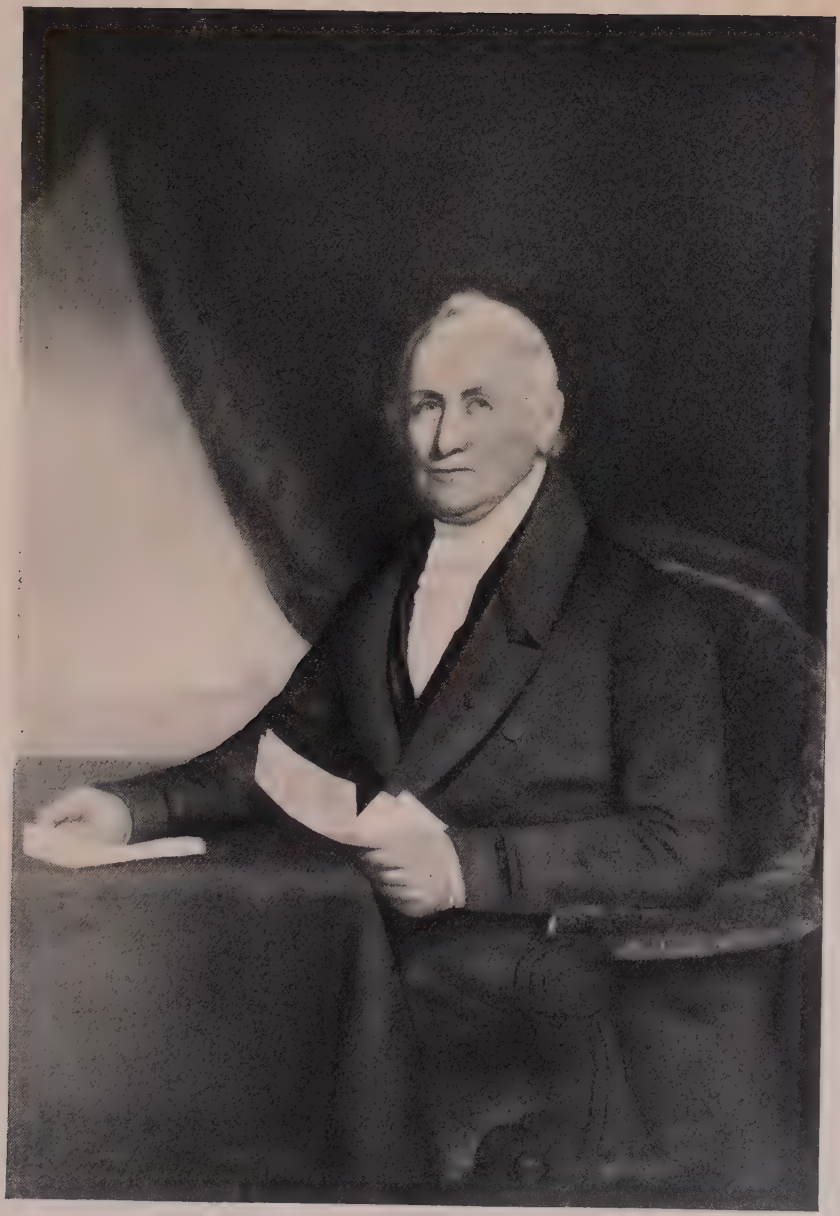
> "The youth ambitious sought a sickly clime,
> His hopes of profit banished all his fears;
> His was the generous wish of love divine,
> To sooth a mother's cares and dry her tears."

Joseph Peabody began his sea life when a lad in his teens in the hardy school of the Revolutionary privateersmen. He made his first cruise in Elias Hasket Derby's privateer, *Bunker Hill*, and his second in the *Pilgrim* owned by the Cabots of Beverly. A little later he became second officer of a letter of marque ship, the *Ranger*, owned by Boston and Salem shipping merchants. It was while aboard the *Ranger* that young Peabody won his title as a fighting seaman. Leaving Salem in the winter of 1781–82, the *Ranger* carried salt to Richmond, and loaded with flour at Alexandria for Havana. Part of this cargo of flour was from the plantation of George Washington, and the immortal story of the hatchet and the cherry tree must have been known in Cuba even then, for the Spanish merchants expressed a preference for this brand of flour and showed their confidence by receiving it at the marked weight without putting it on the scales.

The *Ranger* returned to Alexandria for another cargo of flour, and on July 5th, 1782, dropped down the Potomac, ready for sea. Head winds compelled her to anchor near the mouth of the river. At three o'clock of the following night, the seaman on watch ran aft, caught up a speaking trumpet, and shouted down to the sleeping officers in the cabin that two boats were making for the ship. Captain Simmons and Lieutenant Peabody rushed up the companionway, and as they reached the deck, received a volley of musketry from the darkness. Captain Simmons fell, badly wounded, and Peabody ran forward in his night clothes, calling to the crew to get their boarding pikes. He caught up a pike and with a brave and ready seaman named Kent, sprang to the bows and engaged in a hand to hand fight with the boarding party which was already pouring over the rail from the boat alongside.

The *Ranger's* crew rallied and held the deck against this invasion until a second boat made fast in another quarter and swept the deck with musket fire. The first officer was in the magazine below, breaking out ammunition, the captain was wounded, and the command of this awkward situation fell upon Lieutenant, or Second Officer Peabody, who was a conspicuous mark in his white nightshirt. He ordered cold shot heaved into the boats to sink them if possible, and one of them was smashed and sunk in short order.

Peabody then mustered his crew against the boarding party from the other boat, and drove them overboard. After the *Ranger's* decks had been cleared in fierce and bloody fashion and the fight was won, it was found that one of her crew was dead, three wounded, the captain badly hurt, and although Peabody had not known it in the heat of action, he had stopped two musket balls and bore the marks of a third. One of the very able seamen of the *Ranger* had seen a boarder about to fire point-blank at Peabody and with a sweep of his cutlass he



Joseph Peabody

cut off the hand that held the pistol. For this service Peabody made the seaman a life-long pensioner, showing that his heart was in the right place in more ways than one.

The *Ranger* carried twenty men and seven guns at this time, and the enemy attempted to carry the ship with sixty men in two barges, their loss being more than forty in killed and wounded. They were later ascertained to be a band of Tories who had infested the bay of the mouth of the Potomac for some time, and had captured a brig of ten guns and thirty men a few days before this. The *Ranger* sailed up to Alexandria to refit and land her wounded, and the merchants of the town presented the ship with a silver mounted boarding-pike in token of their admiring gratitude for her stout defense. This trophy became the property of Joseph Peabody and was highly prized as an adornment of his Salem mansion in later years.

When the *Ranger* went to sea again, Thomas Perkins of Salem, her first officer, was given the command and Peabody sailed with him as chief mate. Thus began a friendship which later became a business partnership in which Perkins amassed a large fortune of his own. Peabody sailed as a shipmaster for a Salem firm for several years after peace came, and at length bought a schooner, the *Three Friends*, in which he traded to the West Indies and Europe. The story of his career thereafter was one of successful speculation in ships and cargoes and of a growing fleet of deep-water vessels until his death in 1844, a venerable man of large public spirit, and shining integrity, a pillar of his state and town, whose fortune had been won in the golden age of American enterprise in remote seas.

William Gray completed the triumvirate of Salem ship owners of surpassing sagacity and success, his name being rightfully linked with those of Elias Hasket Derby and Joseph Peabody. He served his apprenticeship in the counting room of Richard Derby and was one of the earliest American shipping merchants

to seek the trade of Canton and the ports of the East Indies. In 1807 he owned fifteen ships, seven barks, thirteen brigs, and one schooner, or one-fourth of the tonnage of the port. He became the lieutenant governor of the Commonwealth and left a princely fortune as the product of his far-sighted industry.

For the information of those unfamiliar with the records of that epoch on the seas, the rapidity with which these lords of maritime trade acquired their fleets and the capital needed to freight and man them, it may be worth while to give a concrete example of the profits to be won in those ventures of large risks and larger stakes. A letter written from the great shipping house of the Messrs. Perkins in Boston to their agents in Canton in 1814, goes to show that the operations of the captains of industry of the days of Derby and Gray and Peabody would have been respected by the capitalists of this twentieth century. Here is the kind of Arabian Night's Entertainment in the way of dazzling rewards which these old-time merchants planned to reap:

"To Messers. Perkins and Co. Canton, Jan. 1, 1814.

"You say a cargo laid at Canton would bring three for one in South America, and your copper would give two prices back. Thus, $30,000 laid out in China would give you $90,000 in South America, one half of which laid out in copper would give one hundred per cent, or $90,000, making $135,000 for $30,000.

"60,000 pounds of indigo even at 80 cents, $48,000; 120 tons of sugar at $60, or $7,200, and cotton or some other light freight, say skin tea, $20,000, in all $75,000, would be worth $400,000 here, and not employ the profits of the voyage to South America. Manila sugar is worth $400 or $500 per ton here, clear of duty. The ship should be flying light, her bottom in good order, the greatest vigilance used on the voyage and make any port north of New York.

"(signed) Thomas H. Perkins and James Perkins."

It was the heyday of opportunity for youth. Robert Bennett Forbes, by way of example, was the nephew of this Thomas Perkins of Boston, and likewise became a wealthy merchant and ship owner. Young Forbes went to sea before the mast as a boy of thirteen. He has told how his mother equipped him with a supply of thread, needles, buttons, etc., in his ditty-bag, also some well-darned socks, a Testament, a bottle of lavender water, one of essence of peppermint, a small box of broken sugar and a barrel of apples. "She wanted to give me a pillow and some sheets and pillow cases," he writes, "but I scorned the idea, having been told that sailors never used them, but usually slept with a stick of wood with the bark on for a pillow. My good mother who had been at sea herself and fully realized the dangers and temptations to which I should be exposed, felt that there could be but one more severe trial for her, and that was to put me in my grave. My uncle contributed a letter full of excellent advice, recommending me to fit myself to be a good captain and promising to keep me in mind. William Sturgiss, who had much experience of the sea, took an interest in me and gave me this advice:

"'Always go straight forward, and if you meet the Devil cut him in two and go between the pieces; if any one imposes on you, tell him to whistle against a northwester and to bottle up moonshine.'"

Forbes was 15 years old when Mr. Cushing, of the firm's shipping house in Canton, wrote to Thomas H. Perkins in Boston:

"I have omitted in my letters per *Nautilus*, mentioning our young friend Bennet Forbes, recommending his being promoted to be an officer on the return of the Canton packet. He is without exception the finest lad I have ever known, and has already the stability of a man of thirty. During the stay of the ship I have had him in the office and have found him as useful as if he had been regularly brought up in the business; he has profited so much by the little intercourse he has had with the

Chinese that he is now more competent to transact business than one half of the supercargoes sent out."

The Crowninshield family of Salem earned very unusual distinction on salt water and a national fame as men of affairs and statecraft. There were six brothers of them, born of a seafaring father and grandfather, and this stalwart half dozen Crowninshields one and all, went to sea as boys. One died of fever at Guadaloupe at the age of fourteen while captain's clerk of a Salem ship. The five surviving brothers commanded ships before they were old enough to vote, and at one time the five were absent from Salem, each in his own vessel, and three of them in the East India trade.

"When little boys they were all sent to a common school and about their eleventh year began their first particular study which should develop them as sailors and ship captains. These boys studied their navigation as little chaps of twelve years old and were required to thoroughly master the subject before being sent to sea. It was common in those days to pursue their studies by much writing out of problems, and boys kept their books until full. Several such are among our family records and are interesting in the extreme, beautifully written, without blots or dog's ears, and all the problems of navigation as practised then, are drawn out in a neat and in many cases a remarkably handsome manner. The designing of vessels was also studied and the general principles of construction mastered.

"As soon as the theory of navigation was mastered, the youngsters were sent to sea, sometimes as common sailors, but commonly as ship's clerks, in which position they were enabled to learn everything about the management of a ship without actually being a common sailor."*

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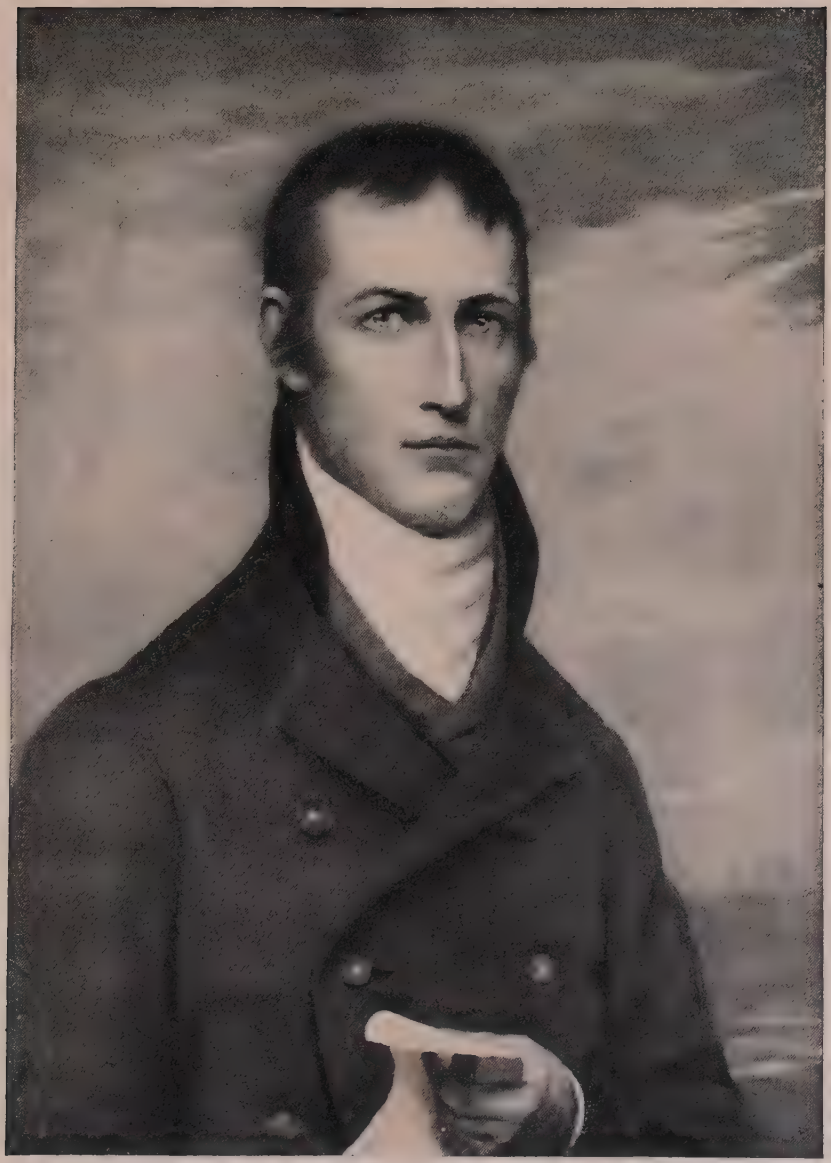
*From "An Account of the Yacht *Cleopatra's Barge*." by Benjamin W. Crowninshield, Historical Collections of the Essex Institute, from which much of the information in this chapter is derived.



Hon. Jacob Crowninshield

This method of nautical education was of course open only to those of considerable influence who wished to fit their sons to become merchants as well as shipmasters. It seems to have been remarkably efficient in training the five Crowninshields. One of these shipmasters, Benjamin W., became Secretary of the Navy under Jefferson, and United States Congressman, while another brother, Jacob, was a Congressman from 1803 to 1805 and had the honor of declining a seat in Jefferson's Cabinet. Jacob Crowninshield, however, earned a more popular kind of fame by bringing home from India in 1796, the first live elephant ever seen in America. It is probable that words would be wholly inadequate to describe the sensation created by this distinguished animal when led through the streets of Salem, with a thousand children clamoring their awe and jubilation.* It is recorded that this unique and historical elephant was sold for ten thousand dollars.

The eldest of these brothers, Captain George Crowninshield, who served his years at sea, from forecastle to cabin, and then retired ashore to become a shipping merchant, was the patriotic son of Salem who chartered the brig *Henry*, manned her with a crew of shipmasters and sailed to Halifax to bring home the bodies of Lawrence and Ludlow after the defeat of the *Chesapeake* by the *Shannon*. Those who knew him have handed down a vivid description of his unusual personality. He was

* (1797) "Aug. 30.—Went to the Market House to see the Elephant. The crowd of spectators forbade me any but a general and superficial view of him. He was six feet four inches high. Of large Volume, his skin black as tho' lately oiled. A short hair was on every part but not sufficient for a covering. His tail hung one third of his height, but without any long hair at the end of it. His legs were still at command at the Joints but he could not be persuaded to lie down. The Keeper repeatedly mounted him but he persisted in shaking him off. Bread and Hay were given him and he took bread out of the pockets of the spectators. He also drank porter and drew the cork, conveying the liquor from his trunk into his throat. His Tusks were just to be seen beyond the flesh and it was said had been broken. We say *his* because this is the common language. It is a female, and teats appeared just behind the fore legs." (From the Diary of Dr. William Bentley.)

robust and daring beyond the ordinary, and a great dandy in his small clothes and Hessian boots with gold tassels. "His coat was wonderful in cloth, pattern, trimmings and buttons, and his waistcoat was a work of art. He wore a pigtail and on top of all a bell-crowned beaver hat, not what is called a beaver to-day, but made of beaver skin, shaggy like a terrier dog."

Captain George has the distinction of being the first American yacht owner. As early as 1801 he had built in Salem a sloop called the *Jefferson* in which he cruised for several years. She was turned into a privateer in the War of 1812. While the *Jefferson* was beyond doubt the first vessel built for pleasure in this country, and the first yacht that ever flew the Stars and Stripes, her fame is overshadowed by that of the renowned *Cleopatra's Barge*, the second yacht owned by Captain Crowninshield, and the first of her nation to cruise in foreign waters. The *Cleopatra's Barge* was a nine-days' wonder from Salem to the Mediterranean, and was in many ways one of the most remarkable vessels ever launched.

Her owner found himself at forty-nine years in the prime of his adventurous energy with his occupation gone. The shipping firm founded by his father had been dissolved, and this member of the house fell heir to much wealth and leisure. Passionately fond of the sea and sailors he determined to build the finest vessel ever dreamed of by a sober-minded American, and to cruise and live aboard her for the remainder of his days. There were no other yachts to pattern after, wherefore the *Cleopatra's Barge* was modeled and rigged after the fashion of a smart privateer, or sloop-of-war.

When she was launched in Salem harbor in 1817, at least a thousand curious people visited her every day she lay in port. Her fittings were gorgeous for her time, what with Oriental draperies, plate glass mirrors, sideboards, and plate. She was eighty-seven feet long, and in dimensions almost the counter-

part of the famous sloop *Mayflower* of modern times. When she was ready for sea, this yacht had cost her owner fifty thousand dollars. She was rigged as a brigantine, and carried a mighty press of sail, studding-sails on the fore-yards, sky-sail, "ring-tail," "water-sail," and other handkerchiefs now unknown.

With that bold individuality of taste responsible for the yellow curricle in which Captain George was wont to dazzle Salem, when he drove through the streets, he painted his yacht in different colors and patterns along her two sides. To starboard she showed a hull of horizontal stripes laid on in most of the colors of the rainbow. To port she was a curious "herring-bone" pattern of brilliant hues. Her stern was wide and pierced with little cabin windows.

With his cousin Benjamin as skipper, and a friend, Samuel Curwen Ward, the owner sailed for the Mediterranean on what was destined to be a triumphant voyage. He had prepared himself with no fewer than three hundred letters of introduction to eminent civil, military and naval persons of Italy, Spain and other countries. The cook of the *Cleopatra's Barge* was a master of his craft, the stock of wine was choice and abundant, and if ever an open-handed yachtsman sailed the deep it was this Salem pioneer of them all.

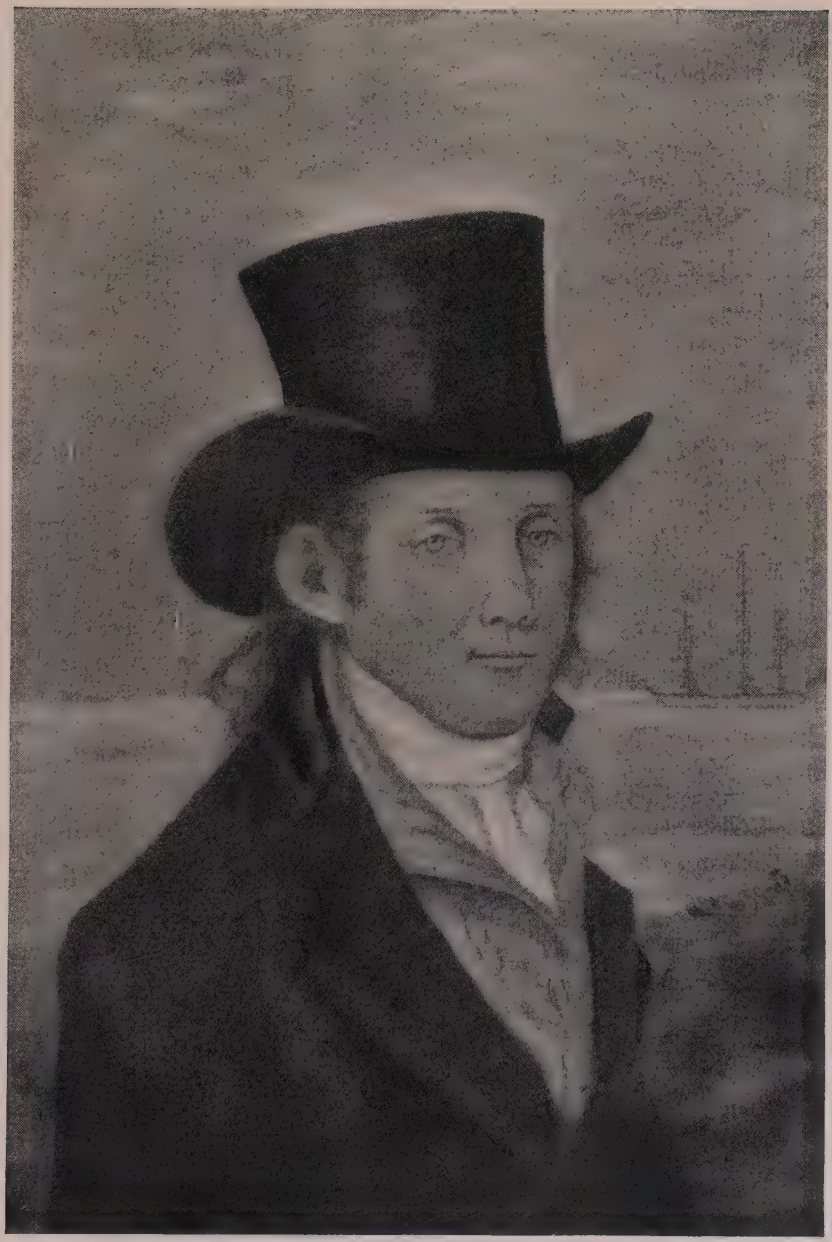
The vessel was the sensation of the hour in every port. Her journal recorded that an average of more than three thousand visitors came aboard on every pleasant day while she was in foreign ports, and that in Barcelona eight thousand people came off to inspect her in one day. Wherever possible the owner chartered a band of music or devised other entertainment for his guests. His yacht was more than a pleasure barge, for he had the pleasure of beating the crack frigate *United States* in a run from Cartagena to Port Mahone, and on the way to Genoa she logged thirteen knots for twelve hours on end.

It was at Genoa that an Italian astronomer of considerable distinction, Baron von Zack, paid a visit on board and several years later recorded his impressions of the *Cleopatra's Barge* in a volume, written in French, and published in Genoa in 1820.

"How does it happen that the Commanders of French vessels, with thirty-four schools of Hydrography established in the Kingdom, either know not, or do not wish to know, how to calculate the longitude of their vessels by Lunar distances, while even the cooks and negroes of American vessels understand it?

"I will now relate what I once witnessed on board an American vessel, the *Cleopatra's Barge*, which arrived in the month of July, 1817, at the port of Genoa from Salem, one of the handsomest Towns in the State of Massachusetts, U. S. A., Lat. 42° 35′ 20″ N., Long. 73° 9′ 30″ W. All the city crowded to see this magnificent palace of Neptune; more than 20,000 persons had visited this superb floating palace, and were astonished at its beauty, luxury and magnificence. I went among others. The owner was on board; he was a gentleman of fortune of Salem, who had amassed great riches during the late war with Great Britain. He was brother to the Secretary of the Navy of the United States.

"This elegant vessel was built for his own amusement, after his own ideas, upon a plan and model new in very many respects, and was considered the swiftest sailer in America. He had traveled or sailed for his pleasure in this costly jewel (*bijou*) that appeared more the model of a cabinet of curiosities than a real vessel. He had left America in this charming shell (*coquille*) for the purpose of visiting Europe and making the tour of the Mediterranean & had already touched at the ports of Spain, France, Italy, the Archipelago, Dardanelles, coasts of Asia, Africa, etc. We have since heard of the death of this gentleman, a short time after his return to Salem. His name was George Crowninshield—he was of German origin—his ancestor



Benjamin Crowninshield

was a Saxon officer who, having the misfortune to kill his adversary in a duel, sought refuge in America. The captain of this beautiful vessel was a lively old gentleman, a cousin to Mr. Crowninshield—his son, a young man, was also on board. I shall not here enter into detail concerning the remarkable construction of this vessel, still less her splendor—the public journals have already noticed them.

"In making some enquiries respecting my friends and correspondents in Philadelphia and Boston, among others I mentioned Dr. Bowditch. 'He is the friend of our family, and our neighbor in Salem,' replied the old Captain. 'My son, whom you see there, was his pupil; it is properly he, and not myself, that navigates this vessel; question him and see if he has profited by his instructions.'

"I observed to this young man, 'you have had so excellent a teacher in Hydrography that you cannot fail of being well acquainted with the science. In making Gibralter what was the error in your longitude?' The young man replied, 'Six miles.' 'Your calculations were then very correct; how did you keep your ship's accounts?' 'By chronometers and by Lunar observations.' 'You then can ascertain your Longitude by Lunar distances?'

"Here my young captain appearing to be offended with my question, replied with some warmth, 'What! I know how to calculate Lunar distances! Our cook can do that!' 'Your cook!' Here Mr. Crowninshield and the old Captain assured me, that the cook on board could calculate Longitude quite well; that his taste for it frequently led him to do it. 'That is he,' said the young man, pointing to a Negro in the after part of the vessel, with a white apron about his waist, a fowl in one hand, and a carving knife in the other.

"'Come here, John,' said the old Captain to him, 'this gentleman is surprised that you understand Lunar observations.

Answer his questions.' I asked, 'By what method do you calculate Lunar distances?' The cook answered, 'It is immaterial—I use some time the method of Maskelyne, Lyons, or Bowditch, but I prefer that of Dunthorne, as I am more accustomed to it.' I could hardly express my surprise at hearing that black-face answer in such a manner, with a bloody fowl and carving knife in his hands.

"'Go,' said Mr. Crowninshield, 'lay aside your fowl and bring your books and journal and show your calculations to the gentleman.' The cook returned with his books under his arms, consisting of Bowditch's Practical Navigator, Maskelyne's Requisite Tables, Hutton's Logarithms and the Nautical Almanack, abridged from the Greenwich Edition. I saw all the calculations this Negro had made on his passage, of Latitude, Longitude, Apparent Time, etc. He replied to all my questions with admirable precision, not merely in the phrases of a cook, but in correct nautical language.

"This cook had sailed as cabin-boy with Captain Cook in his last voyage round the world and was acquainted with several facts relative to the assassination of the celebrated navigator at Owhyhee, February, 1779. 'The greatest part of the seamen on board the Barge,' said Mr. Crowninshield, 'can use the sextant and make nautical calculations.'

"Indeed Mr. Crowninshield had with him many instructors. At Genoa he had taken one acquainted with Italian—he had also on board an instructor in the French language, a young man who had lost his fingers in the Russian campaign. What instruction! what order! what correctness! what magnificence was to be observed in this Barge; I could relate many more interesting particulars concerning this true Barque of *Cleopatra.*"

The editor of the *Diario di Roma* newspaper of Rome considered the *Cleopatra's Barge* worthy of a eulogistic notice, a

translation of which was printed in the *Essex Register* of October 11, 1817:

"Soon after the visit of the fleet, there anchored in our port a schooner from America, of a most beautiful construction, elegantly found, very light, and formed for fast sailing, and armed like our light armed vessels. It was named the *Cleopatra*, belonging to a very rich traveller, George Crowninshield, of Salem, who constructed her for his own use, and for the voyages he had undertaken in company with Captain Benjamin Crowninshield, his cousin. Besides the extreme neatness of everything about the vessel to fit her for sea, her accommodations were surprising and wonderful. Below was a hall of uncommon extent, in which the luxury of taste, the riches and elegance of the furniture, the harmony of the drapery, and of all the ornaments, inspired pleasure and gallantry. The apartment of the stern was equally rich and interesting. Five convenient bed chambers displayed with that same elegance, were at the service of the Captain, with an apartment for the plate of every kind, with which it was filled. Near was another apartment which admitted all the offices of a kitchen, and in it was a pump with three tubes which passed through the vessel, to supply water from the sea, or discharge what they pleased, with the greatest ease.

"The rich and distinguished owner had with him beside his family servants, several linguists, persons of high talent in music, and an excellent painter. Everything to amuse makes a part of the daily entertainment. The owner and Captain were affable, pleasing and civil, and gave full evidence of the talents, the industry and the good taste of their nation, which yields to none in good sense and true civility. The above travellers having complied with the usual rules of the city, upon receiving a particular invitation, he visited the *Cleopatra* in company with many persons of distinction, and partook of an elegant collation."

The *Salem Gazette* of Sept. 26, 1817, contained the following "extract of a letter from a gentleman on board the *Cleopatra's Barge*":

"BARCELONA, June 8.

"You have undoubtedly heard of our movements in the Mediterranean; indeed you must have heard of us, from every place at which we have touched—for the *Cleopatra's Barge* is more celebrated abroad than at home. Even the Moors of Tangier visited us tho' they abhor the Christians. At Gibralter the Englishmen were astonished. In Malaga, Carthagena and this place the Spaniards have been thunderstruck. For these four days past the whole of this great city has been in an uproar. They begin to crowd on board at daylight, and continue to press upon us till night. This morning the Mole was so crowded with people waiting to come on board, that we have been obliged to get under weigh, and stand out of the Mole, yet the boats, with men, women and children, are rowing after us. Thus it has been in every place we have visited. In Port Mahon we were visited by all the officers of our squadron."

Further tidings were conveyed to the admiring townspeople of Salem by means of an article in the *Essex Register* under date of Oct. 25th:

"Having noticed the attention paid to the American barge *Cleopatra*, at Rome, we could not refuse the pleasure of assuring our friends that Capt. G. Crowninshield had been equally successful in arresting attention in France. The following is an extract from a Letter dated at Marseilles, 14th July, 1817, from a person long residing in France: 'Capt. G. Crowninshield left this port in the beginning of this month, for Toulon and Italy. During his stay here, thousands of both sexes were on board of his beautiful Vessel. Every day it was like a continual procession. It gave me the utmost pleasure, as the universal

Ship *Ulysses*—This painting shows a jury rudder about to be put in place at sea, in 1806. So ingenious was the display of seamanship in the rigging of this emergency rudder that her commander, Capt. Wm. Mugford, was awarded a medal by the American Philosophical Society

Yacht *Cleopatra's Barge*, 191 tons, built in salem, 1816, shows the "herring-bone" design painted in bright colors on side of the yacht

opinion was that no vessel could compare with this Vessel. I felt proud that such a splendid specimen of what could be done in the United States was thus exhibited in Europe. We consider it as an act of patriotism. The Vessel was admired. The exquisite taste in her apartments greatly astonished the French for their *amour propre* had inclined them to believe that only in France the true *gout* was known.'"

The *Cleopatra's Barge* returned to Salem in triumph, but Captain George Crowninshield died on board while making ready for a second voyage abroad. She was sold and converted into a merchantman, made a voyage to Rio, then rounded the Horn, and at the Sandwich Islands was sold to King Kamehameha to be used as a royal yacht. Only a year later her native crew put her on a reef and the career of the *Cleopatra's Barge* was ended in this picturesque but inglorious fashion.

In reading the old-time stories of the sea, one is apt to forget that wives and sweethearts were left at home to wait and yearn for their loved ones, for these logs and journals deal with the day's work of strong men as they fought and sailed and traded in many seas. Few letters which they sent home have been preserved. It is therefore the more appealing and even touching to find in a fragment of the log of the ship *Rubicon*, the expression of such sentiment as most of these seamen must have felt during the lonely watches in mid-ocean. It is a curious document, this log, written by a shipmaster whose name cannot be found in the bundle of tattered sheets rescued from the rubbish of an old Salem garret.

On the fly leaf is scrawled:

"Boston, May the 11th, 1816. Took a pilot on board the Ship *Rubicon* and sailed from Charlestown. 12th of May at 3 P.M. came to an anchor above the Castle, the wind S.E."

The ship was bound from Boston to St. Petersburg, and after he had been a week at sea, her master began to write at the

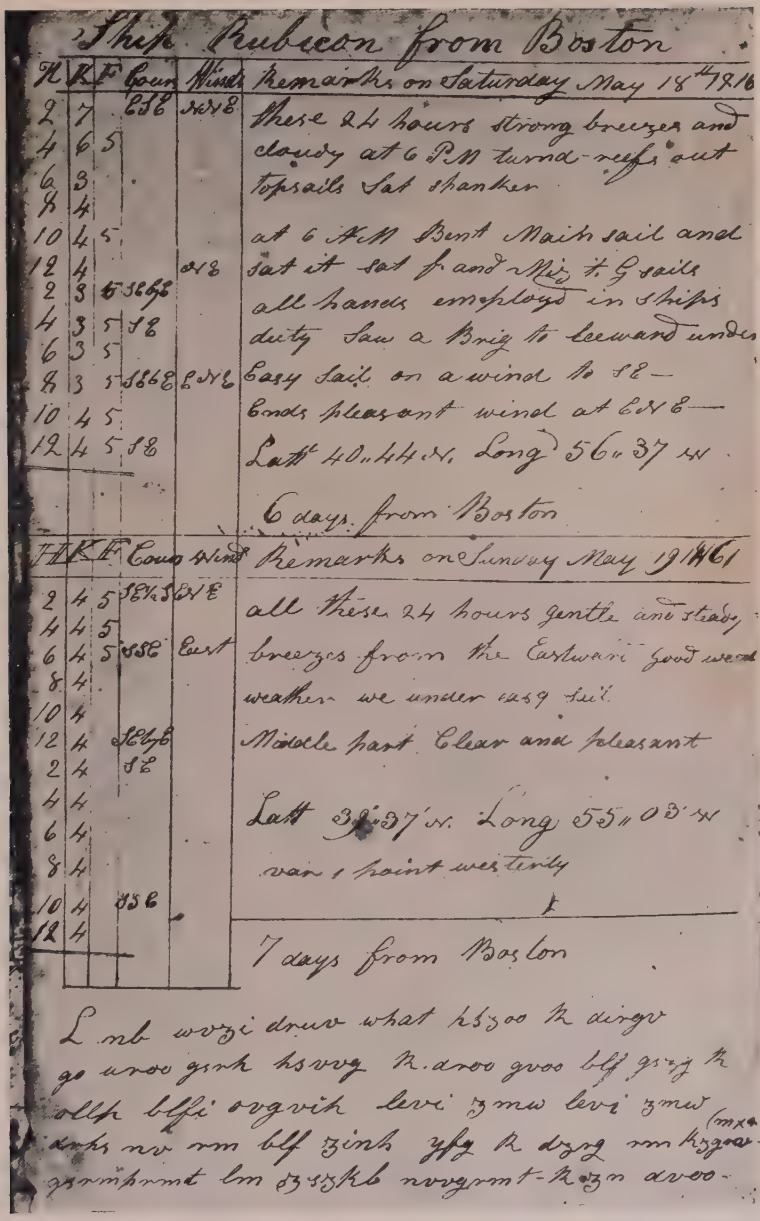
bottom of the pages of his log certain intimately personal sentiments which he sought to conceal in a crude cipher of his own devising. The first of these entries reads as follows as the captain set it down, letter by letter:

"L nb wvzi druv what hszoo R dirgv go uroo gsrh hsvvg R droo gvoo blf gszg R ollp blfi ovgvih levi zmw levi zmw drhs nv rm blf zinh yfg R dzng rm kzgrvmxv gsrmprmt lm Z szkb nvvgrmt——R zn dvoo."

It is not easy to fathom why the captain of the good ship *Rubicon* should have chosen to make such entries as this in the log. This much is clear, however, that he longed to say what was in his heart and he wished to keep it safe from prying eyes. He left no key to his cipher, but his code was almost childish in its simplicity, and was promptly unraveled by the finder of the manuscript, David Mason Little of Salem. The old shipmaster reversed the alphabet, setting down "Z" for "A," "Y" for "B," and so on, or for convenience in working it out, the letters may be placed as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| A—Z | N—M |
| B—Y | O—L |
| C—X | P—K |
| D—W | Q—J |
| E—V | R—I |
| F—U | S—H |
| G—T | T—G |
| H—S | U—F |
| I—R | V—E |
| J—Q | W—D |
| K—P | X—C |
| L—O | Y—B |
| M—N | Z—A |

Reading from the top of the column, the letters of the reversed alphabet are to be substituted for the letters standing opposite



Ship Rubicon from Boston

| H | K | F | Cour | Wind | Remarks on Saturday May 18th 1816 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 7 | | ESE | NNE | these 24 hours strong breezes and |
| 4 | 6 | 5 | | | cloudy at 6 PM turnd-reefs out |
| 6 | 3 | | | | topsails Sat shanker |
| 8 | 4 | | | | |
| 10 | 4 | 5 | | | at 6 AM Bent Main sail and |
| 12 | 4 | | | NE | sat it sat f and Mizt G sails |
| 2 | 3 | 5 | SEbE | | all hands employd in ships |
| 4 | 3 | 5 | SE | | duty Saw a Brig to leeward under |
| 6 | 3 | 5 | | | |
| 8 | 3 | 5 | SEbE | ENE | Easy Sail on a wind to SE— |
| 10 | 4 | 5 | | | Ends pleasant wind at ENE— |
| 12 | 4 | 5 | SE | | Latt 40.44 N. Long 56.37 W |
| | | | | | 6 days from Boston |

| H | K | F | Cour | Wind | Remarks on Sunday May 19th 1816 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 4 | 5 | SE½S | ENE | all these 24 hours gentle and steady |
| 4 | 4 | 5 | | | |
| 6 | 4 | 5 | SSE | East | breezes from the Eastward Good weather |
| 8 | 4 | | | | weather we under easy sail |
| 10 | 4 | | | | |
| 12 | 4 | | SEbE | | Middle part Clear and pleasant |
| 2 | 4 | | SE | | |
| 4 | 4 | | | | Latt 39.37 N. Long 55.03 W |
| 6 | 4 | | | | |
| 8 | 4 | | | | van 1 point westerly |
| 10 | 4 | | SSE | | |
| 12 | 4 | | | | 7 days from Boston |

L nb wvzi druv what hszoo k dirgv
go uroo gsrh hsvvg k droo gvoo blf gszg k
ollh blfi ovgvih levi zmw levi zmw
drhs nv rm blf zinh yfg k dzrg rm kzgoo (mxa
gsrmhrmt lm szszkb nvvgrmt-kzn dvoo-

Log of the good ship *Rubicon*, showing the captain's cipher at the bottom of the page

them in their normal order. The passage already quoted therefore translates itself as follows:

"O, Dear Wife, what shall I write to fill this sheet. I will tell you that I look your letters over and over and wish me in your arms, but I wait in patience, thinking on a happy meeting. I am well."

Other messages which this sailor wrote from his heart and confided to his cipher in the log of the *Rubicon* read in this wise:

"My Heart within me (is) ashes. I want to see my loving Wife and press her to my bosom. But, O, my days are gone and past no more to return forever."

* * * * * *

"True, undivided and sincere love united with its own object is one of the most happy Passions that possesses the human heart."

* * * * * *

"Joanna, this day brings to my mind grateful reflections. "This is the day that numbers thirty years of my Dear's life. O, that I could lay in her arms to-night and recount the days that have passed away in youthful love and pleasure."

* * * * * *

"The seed is sown, it springs up and grows to maturity, then drops its seed and dies away, while the young shoot comes up and takes its place. And so it is with Man that is born to die."

Now and then a sea tragedy is so related in these old log books that the heart is touched with a genuine sympathy for the victim, as if he were more than a name, as if he were a friend or a neighbor. It is almost certain that no one alive to-day has ever heard of Aaron Lufkin, able seaman, who sailed from Calcutta for the Cape of Good Hope in the year 1799. The ship's clerk, William Cleveland of Salem, who kept a journal of the voyage, wrote of this sailor in such a way that you will

be able to see him for what he was, and will perhaps wish no better epitaph for yourself:

"Aaron Lufkin, one of the most active of our seamen held out till he was scarcely able to walk, but as this appeared to be fatigue, his case was not particularly observed by the Captain nor officers. When he first complained he said he had been unwell for some days but that there were so few on duty he would stand it out. Unfortunately his zeal for his duty cost him his life, for on the 17th of April he died after lingering in torment for several days. He was often out of his head and continually on the fly when no person was attending him, and constantly talking of his father, mother and sisters, which shewed how fond he was of them. Indeed his little purchases in Calcutta for his sisters were a sufficient proof. He was the only son of a respectable tradesman in the town of Freeport (Maine) and the brother of eight or nine sisters, all of which were younger than himself, though he was but twenty years old."

The death of an able seaman, under such peaceful circumstances as these, was a matter of no importance except to his kindred and his shipmates. It is significant of the spirit and singularly dramatic activity of those times that the loss of a whole ship's company might be given not so much space in the chronicles of the town as the foregoing tribute to poor Aaron Lufkin. Indeed "Felt's Annals of Salem" is fairly crowded with appalling tragedies, told in a few bald lines, of which the following are quoted as examples of condensed narration:

"News is received here that Captain Joseph Orne in the ship *Essex* had arrived at Mocha, with $60,000 to purchase coffee, and that Mahomet Ikle, commander of an armed ship, persuaded him to trade at Hadidido, and to take on board 30 of his Arabs to help navigate her thither while his vessel kept her company; that on the approach of night, and at a concerted

signal, the Arabs attacked the crew of the *Essex*, and Ikle laid his ship alongside, and that the result was the slaughter of Captain Orne, and all his men, except a Dutch boy named John Hermann Poll. The *Essex* was plundered and burnt. The headless corpse of Capt. Orne and the mutilated remains of a merchant floated on shore and were decently buried. It was soon after ascertained that the faithless Mahomet was a notorious pirate of that country. He kept the lad whose life he had spared, as a slave until 1812, when Death kindly freed him from his cruel bondage."

On the 13th of November, 1807, "the ship *Marquis de Somereulas** arrives hither from Cronstadt and Elsinore. She brings in eleven men, a woman called Joanna Evans, and her child, which were picked up Oct. 28th in a longboat. The rest being eight in number, were rescued at the same time on board a ship from Philadelphia. They had been in the boat six days, during which seven of their company died of starvation. The living, in order to sustain themselves, fed upon the dead. They were the remains of one hundred and ten souls on board an English transport which was waterlogged and then blew up

* "A narrative dated Sept. 18, 1806, is published. It relates that the ship *Marquis de Sumereulas*, Captain William Story, on the coast of Sumatra, had a narrow escape from being surprised by some of the natives. Two proas came alongside with fourteen men who were allowed to come on board. Only five of the ship's company were left on deck. The mate and rest of the hands were stowing the cargo. The captain, being in the cabin, heard Mr. Bromfield, the clerk who was above, exclaim that he was cresed. The sailmaker ran to his rescue, but was dangerously wounded and jumped down the hatchway. All the hands below were ordered to gain the deck, though they had scarcely any arms. The captain, while endeavoring to ascend the companionway, was attacked with boarding pikes. His men attempted to get up but were repulsed with several of them wounded. They were rallied and another effort was about to be made. The injunction was given that if they did not succeed, and the Malays took possession of the ship, a match should be applied to the magazine to blow her up. In the meanwhile the natives had retreated, which was immediately discovered by the crew who got on deck with the expectation of a deadly contest. Mr. Bromfield was found dead. The carpenter and cook were missing, but these two had escaped in a boat and soon returned to unite with their comrades." (Felt's "Annals of Salem.")

and foundered. The captain and some of his men, being in a small boat, by some means or other separated from those in the long boat and were never afterwards heard of. After the sad story of these shipwrecked sufferers was generally known among our citizens, they experienced from them the most kindly sympathy and substantial aid to the amount of between two and three hundred dollars."

A more cheerful story, and one which may be called an old-fashioned sea yarn, was told with much detail by a writer in the Salem *Evening Journal* in 1855, who had received it at first hand from a shipmate of the hero. In 1808, when England was nominally at peace with the United States, but molesting her commerce and impressing her seamen with the most pernicious energy, the bark *Active*, of Salem, arrived at Martha's Vineyard and Captain Richardson reported that "while on his course for Europe he was captured by an English letter-of-marque, whose commander put seven men on board with Captain Richardson and three of his crew, the rest of his men being taken from him and the bark ordered to Nevis. When near that port the Americans seized upon the arms of the English, confined them in irons, and put away for home where Captain Richardson afterwards arrived in safety."

"A few years ago," narrates the loquacious contributor to the Salem *Evening Journal* of 1855, "the writer heard from one who was on board the barque *Active* on the above mentioned voyage a somewhat amusing account of one of the crew, who came down from New Hampshire, when she was about ready to sail, and not being able to find any work on shore, shipped with Capt. Richardson and went to sea. As a matter of course, our country friend, as far as regarded nautical phrases and the 'ropes' generally, was extremely verdant. To use his own words, he 'didn't really know t'other from which." Capt. Richardson knew all this beforehand, but he also knew that

our Yankee friend was a tall, stout, and very smart young man and so he did not hesitate at all about taking him on board his vessel. The chief mate, however, not being so well aware of Peleg's verdancy as the Captain, and observing that he stood with his hands in his pockets gazing curiously around the ship, whilst the rest of the crew were engaged in getting the anchor secured, addressed him thus:

"'Who are you?'

"'Peleg Sampson, from away up in Moultonboro, State of New Hampshire. I say, it's a dernation mighty curious place this, ain't it?'

"Rather surprised at the familiar manner of our Yankee friend, the mate replied:

"'I guess you'll find it curious enough before the voyage is up. Lay forward there and help cat that anchor.'

"Whilst the mate stepped on the forecastle for the purpose of superintending this necessary operation, Peleg began to search all around the deck with a minuteness that would have done honor to an experienced gold-hunter. After he had been for a few minutes thus engaged, he followed the mate to the forecastle deck and said:

"'I say, mister, I cack'late there ain't any of them critters here.'

"'What critters? You d—n land-lubber,' said the mate.

"'Cats,' returned Peleg, with an innocent gravity of tone and manner, which made the sailors turn from their work and gaze, open-mouthed, upon their verdant shipmate.

"'Who the ——— said anything about cats?' asked the mate.

"'Why you, you tarnal goslin,' returned Peleg somewhat tartly. 'Didn't you tell me to help cat the anchor, and before I could do that ere, hadn't I got to find the animal to do it with, hey, what?'

"On hearing this reply to the mate's question, the old salts

burst out in a loud, uproarious guffaw, in which the chief officer most heartily joined, as he had by this time become most fully aware that Peleg was nothing more nor less than a 'green hand.'

"About a week afterwards, when the *Active* had got well out to sea, and Peleg had recovered from a severe fit of seasickness so as to be able to be about the decks, the mate, being in want of an article from aloft, said to Peleg:

"'Go up in the maintop there, and bring down a slush bucket that's made fast to the topmast rigging.'

"'What, up these rope-ladders do you want me to go?' asked Peleg, with a scared look at the main-rigging.

"'Yes,' returned the mate, 'and be spry about it, too.'

"'Can't do any such business,' returned Peleg, in a very decided tone of voice. 'Why don't you tell me to run overboard. I should jest as soon think on't, really. Now I'm ready to pull and haul, or wrestle, back to back, Indian hug, or any way you like, fight the darnation Englishers till I'm knocked down, or do anything I *kin* do, but as to going up them darnation littleish rope-ladders, I can't think of it no*how*.'

"Thinking it would be as well not to urge the matter farther at that time, the mate sent another hand for the slush bucket, and thus the affair ended. Afterwards, however, as we learned from the same authority, Peleg became one of the smartest sailors on board the vessel, and in the affair of retaking the ship from English, did most excellent and efficient service."

In Felt's Annals of Salem, it is related under date of February 21, 1802, "the ships *Ulysses*, Captain James Cook; *Brutus*, Captain William Brown, owned by the Messrs. Crowninshield; and the *Valusia*, Captain Samuel Cook, belonging to Israel Williams and others sailed for Europe (on the same day). Though when they departed the weather was remarkably pleasant for the season, in a few hours a snowstorm commenced.

After using every exertion to clear Cape Cod the tempest forced them the next day upon its perilous shore. The most sad of all in this threefold catastrophe was the loss of life in the *Brutus*. One hand was killed by the fore-yard prior to the ship striking; another was drowned while attempting to reach the shore, and the commander with six men perished with the cold after they had landed, while anxiously seeking some shelter for their wet, chilled, and exhausted bodies."

"(1819) July 16. A few days since one of our sailors was exceedingly frightened by meeting in the street what he really believed to be the ghost of a shipmate. This person was Peter Jackson, whose worth as a cook was no less because he had a black skin. He had belonged to the brig *Ceres*. As she was coming down the river from Calcutta, she was thrown on her beam ends and Peter fell overboard. Among the things thrown to him was a sail-boom on which he was carried away from the vessel by the rapid current. Of course all on board concluded that he was downed or eaten by crocodiles, and so they reported when reaching home. Administration had been taken on his goods and chattels and he was dead in the eye of the law. But after floating twelve hours he was cast ashore and as soon as possible hastened homeward. Notwithstanding he had hard work to do away with the impression of his being dead, he succeeded and was allowed the rights and privileges of the living."

While Newport and Bristol, of all the New England ports, did the most roaring trade in slaves and rum with the west coast of Africa, Salem appears to have had comparatively few dealings with this kind of commerce. Slavers were fitted out and owned in Salem, but they were an inconsiderable part of the shipping activity, and almost the only records left to portray this darker side of seafaring America in the olden times are fragmentary references such as those already quoted and

these which follow. There has been preserved a singularly pitiful letter from a Salem boy to his mother at home. It reads:

"CAYENNE, April 23, 1789.

"HONOUR'D PARENT:

"I take this Opportunity to write Unto you to let you know of a very bad accident that Happen'd on our late passage from Cape Mount, on the Coast of Africa, bound to Cayenne. We sailed from Cape Mount the 13th of March with 36 Slaves on bord. The 26th day of March the Slaves Rised upon us. At half-past seven, my Sire and Hands being foreward Except the Man at the helm, and myself, three of the Slaves took Possession of the Caben, and two upon the Quarter Deck. Them in the Caben took Possession of the fier Arms, and them on the quarter Deck with the Ax and Cutlash and Other Weapons. Them in the Caben handed up Pistels to them on the quarter Deck.

"One of them fired and killed my Honoured Sire, and still we strove for to subdue them, and then we got on the Quarter Deck and killed two of them. One that was in the Caben was Comeing out at the Caben Windows in order to get on Deck, and we discovered him and Knock'd him overbord. Two being in the Caben we confined the Caben Doors so that they should not kill us.

"Then three men went foreward and got the three that was down their and brought them aft. And their being a Doctor on board, a Passenger that could Speak the Tongue, he sent one of the boys down and Brought up some of the fier Arms and Powder. And then we cal'd them up and one came up, and he Cal'd the other and he Came up. We put them In Irons and Chained them and then the Doctor Dres'd the People's Wounds, they being Slightly Wounded. Then it was one o'clock.

"They buried my Honoured Parent, he was buried as decent

as he could be at Sea, the 16th of this Month. I scalt myself with hot Chocolate but now I am abel to walk about again. So I remain in good Health and hope to find you the Same and all my Sisters and Brothers and all that Inquires after Me. We have sold part of the Slaves and I hope to be home soon. So I Remain your Most Dutiful Son,

"Wm. Fairfield.

"Addressed to Mrs. Rebecca Fairfield,
"Salem, New England."

Under date of May 29, 1789, Doctor Bentley wrote in his diary:

"On Wednesday went to Boston and returned on Friday. News of the death of Captain William Fairfield who commanded the Schooner which sailed in Captain Joseph White's employ in the African Slave Trade. He was killed by the Negroes on board."

This following letter of instructions to one of the few Salem captains in the slave trade was written in 1785, under date of November 12th:

"Our brig of which you have the command, being cleared at the office, and being in every other respect complete for sea, our orders are that you embrace the first fair wind and make the best of your way to the Coast of Africa and there invest your cargo in slaves. As slaves, like other articles when brought to market, generally appear to the best advantage, therefore too critical an inspection cannot be paid to them before purchase; to see that no dangerous distemper is lurking about them, to attend particularly to their age, to their countenance, to the strength of their limbs, and as far as possible to the goodness or badness of their constitutions, etc., will be very considerable objects.

"Male or female slaves, whether full grown, or not, we cannot

particularly instruct you about, and on this head shall only observe that prime male slaves generally sell best in any market. No people require more kind and tender treatment to exhilarate their spirits than the Africians, and while on the one hand you are attentive to this, remember that, on the other hand, too much circumspection cannot be observed by yourself and people to prevent their taking advantage of such treatment by insurrection and so forth. When you consider that on the health of your slaves almost your whole voyage depends, you will particularly attend to smoking your vessel, washing her with vinegar, to the clarifying your water with lime or brimstone, and to cleanliness among your own people as well as among the slaves."

These singularly humane instructions are more or less typical of the conduct of the slave trade from New England during the eighteenth century when pious owners expressed the hope that "under the blessing of God" they might obtain full caroges of negroes. The ships were roomy, comparatively comfortable quarters were provided, and every effort made to prevent losses by disease and shortage of water and provisions. It was not until the nations combined to drive the traffic from the high seas that slavers were built for speed, crammed to the hatches with tortured negroes and hard-driven for the West Indies and Liverpool and Charleston through the unspeakable horrors of the Middle Passage.

Salem records are not proud of even the small share of the town in this kind of commerce, and most of the family papers which dealt with slave trading have been purposely destroyed. It is true also that public sentiment opposed the traffic at an earlier date than in such other New England ports as Bristol and Newport. Slaves captured in British privateers during the Revolution were not permitted to be sold as property, but were treated as prisoners of war. The refusal of Elias Hasket

Derby to let his ship *Grand Turk* take slaves aboard on her first voyage to the Gold Coast was an unusual proceeding for a shipping merchant of that time. Nor according to Doctor Bentley was the slave trade in the best repute among the people of the place.

While Salem commerce was rising in a flood tide of enterprising achievement in the conquest of remote and mysterious markets on the other side of the globe, and the wounds left by the Revolution were scarcely healed, her ships began to bring home new tales of outrage at the hands of British, French and Spanish privateers and men-of-war. There was peace only in name. In 1790, or only seven years after the end of the Revolution, seamen were bitterly complaining of seizures and impressments by English ships, and the war with France was clouding the American horizon. The Algerine pirates also had renewed their informal activities against American shipping, and the shipmasters of Salem found themselves between several kinds of devils and the deep sea wherever they laid their courses.

The history of the sea holds few more extraordinary stories than that related of a Salem sailor and cherished in the maritime chronicles of the town.

"On the 14th of August, 1785, a French vessel from Martinique, bound to Bordeaux came up with the body of a man floating at some fifty rods distance. The captain ordered four men into the boat to pick it up. When brought on board, to the great surprise of the crew, the supposed dead body breathed. Half an hour afterwards the man opened his eyes and exclaimed: 'O God, where am I?' On taking off his clothes to put him to bed it was discovered that he had on a cork jacket and trousers. It was afterwards ascertained that he had sailed from Salem in a brig bound to Madrid. The brig was attacked by Sallee pirates and captured. This sailor, pretending to be

lame, was neglected by the Moors who had captured him. About 11 o'clock at night, having put on his cork apparatus, he let himself down from the forechains into the water unperceived. He swam about two days when he being quite exhausted, his senses left him, in which state he was discovered by the men from the Frigate. On his arrival at Bordeaux he was presented by the Chamber of Commerce with a purse of 300 crowns."

On February 10th, 1795, the following appeal was posted in the streets of Salem:

"For the purpose of taking into consideration the *unhappy situation* of the *unfortunate prisoners* at Algiers, and to devise some Method for carrying into effect a General Collection for their Relief on Thursday, the 19th day of the present Month!

"The Meeting is called by the desire of the Reverend Clergy and other Respectable Citizens of this Town who wish to have some System formed that will meet the Acceptance of the Inhabitants previous to the Day of Contribution.

"The *truly deplorable fate of these miserable captives* loudly calls for your Commiseration, and the Fervent Prayers they have addressed to you from their Gloomy Prisons ought to soften the most Adamantine Heart. They intreat you in the most Impassioned Language not to leave them to dispair, but as *Prisoners of Hope*, let those of them who still survive the Plague, Pestilence, and Famine, anticipate the day that shall relieve them from the Cruel scourge of an Infidel, and restore them to the Arms of their long-bereaved Friends and Country.

"It is hoped that the Humane and Benevolent will attend that Charity may not be defeated of her intended Sacrifice in the auspicious Festival, when the New World shall all be assembled, and the United States shall offer her tribute of Praise and Thanksgiving at the Altars of God."*

An item of the date of February 16th, 1794, records that "information is received that Edward Harwood, mate, James Peas and Samuel Henry of Salem, lately returned from Algerine captivity were apportioned shares of a benefit previously taken for such sufferers at the Boston Theatre."

*The 19th of February, 1795, was a day of National Thanksgiving ordered by proclamation of President Washington.

# CHAPTER X

## THE BUILDING OF THE ESSEX

### (1799)

TWENTIETH century battleships are built at a cost of six or seven millions of dollars with the likelihood of becoming obsolete before they fire a gun in action. It is a task of years to construct one of these mighty fabrics, short-lived as they are in service, and crammed with intricate machinery whose efficiency under stress of war is largely experimental.

One hundred and ten years ago there was launched from a Salem shipyard a wooden sailing frigate called the *Essex*. She was the fastest and handsomest vessel of the United States navy and a dozen years after she first flew the flag of her country she won immortal renown under Captain David Porter. There is hardly a full-rigged sailing ship afloat to-day as small as the *Essex*, and in tonnage many modern three-masted coasting schooners can equal or surpass her. Yet her name is one of the most illustrious in the list of a navy which bears also those of the *Constitution*, the *Hartford*, the *Kearsarge* and the *Olympia*.

It was the maritime war with France at the end of the eighteenth century which caused the building of the *Essex*. When American commerce was being harried unto death by the frigates and privateersmen of "the Terrible Republic" as our sailors called France, our shadow of a navy was wholly helpless to resist, or to protect its nation's shipping. At length, in 1797, Congress authorized the construction of the three famous frigates, *Constitution*, *Constellation* and *United States*, to fight

for American seamen's rights. The temper and conditions of that time were reflected in an address to Congress delivered by President John Adams on November 23, 1797, in which he said:

"The commerce of the United States is essential, if not to their existence, at least to their comfort, growth and prosperity. The genius, character and habits of our people are highly commercial. Their cities have been formed and exist upon commerce; our agriculture, fisheries, arts and manufactures are connected with and dependent upon it. In short, commerce has made this country what it is, and it cannot be destroyed or neglected without involving the people in poverty or distress. Great numbers are directly and solely supported by navigation. The faith of society is pledged for the preservation of the rights of commercial and seafaring, no less than other citizens. Under this view of our affairs I should hold myself guilty of neglect of duty if I forebore to recommend that we should make every exertion to protect our commerce and to place our country in a suitable posture of defence as the only sure means of preserving both."

The material progress of this country has veered so far from seafaring activities that such doctrine as this sounds as archaic as a Puritan edict for bearing arms to church as a protection against hostile savages. One great German or English liner entering the port of New York registers a tonnage equaling that of the whole fleet of ships in the foreign trade of Salem in her golden age of adventurous discovery. Yet the liner has not an American among her crew of five hundred men, and not one dollar of American money is invested in her huge hull. She is a matter of the most complete indifference to the American people, who have ceased to care under what flags their commerce is borne over seas.

On the other hand, the shipping of Salem and other ports was

a factor vital to national welfare a century ago. But when John Adams preached the necessity of resorting to arms to protect it, the country was too poor to create a navy adequate for defense. Forthwith the merchants whose ships were being destroyed in squadrons by French piracy offered to contribute their private funds to build a fleet of frigates that should reinforce the few naval vessels in commission or authorized.

It was a rally for the common good, a patriotic movement in which the spirit of '76 flamed anew. The principles that moved the American people were voiced by James McHenry, Secretary of War in 1789, in a letter to the Chairman of the Committee of the House of Representatives for the Protection of Commerce:

"France derives several important advantages from the system she is pursuing toward the United States. Besides the sweets of plunder obtained by her privateers she keeps in them a nursery of seamen to be drawn upon in conjunctures by the navy. She unfits by the same means the United States for energetic measures and thereby prepares us for the last degree of humiliation and subjection.

"To forbear under such circumstances from taking naval and military measures to secure our trade, defend our territories in case of invasion, and to prevent or suppress domestic insurrection, would be to offer up the United States a certain prey to France . . . and exhibit to the world a sad spectacle of national degradation and imbecility."

In June of the following year, Congress passed an act "to accept not exceeding twelve vessels on the credit of the United States, and to cause evidences of debt to be given therefor, allowing an interest thereon not exceeding six per cent." It was in accordance with this measure, which confessed that the United States was too poor to build a million dollars' worth of wooden ships of war from its treasury, that subscription

The frigate *Essex*, from the only painting made during her career at sea

lists were opened at Newbury, Salem, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Norfolk, the citizens of each of these seaports making ready to contribute a frigate as a loan to the government. Even the infant city of Cincinnati subscribed toward equipping a galley for the defense of the Mississippi against the French.

At Salem, Elias Hasket Derby and William Gray, the two foremost shipping merchants of the town, led the subscription list with the sum of ten thousand dollars each, and in a few weeks $74,700 had been raised in contributions as small as fifty dollars.

*The Salem Gazette* of October 26, 1798, contained this item: "At a meeting in the Courthouse in this town Tuesday evening last, of those gentlemen who have subscribed to build a ship for the service of the United States, it was voted unanimously to build a Frigate of thirty-two guns and to loan the same to the Government; and William Gray, jr., John Norris and Jacob Ashton, Esqr., Captain Benjamin Hodges and Captain Ichabod Nichols were chosen a committee to carry the same into immediate effect." Captain Joseph Waters was appointed General Agent, and Enos Briggs, a shipbuilder of Salem, was selected as master builder.

The Master Builder inserted this advertisement in the Essex *Gazette:*

"The Salem Frigate

"Take Notice.

"To Sons of Freedom! All true lovers of Liberty of your Country. Step forth and give your assistance in building the frigate to oppose French insolence and piracy. Let every man in possession of a white oak tree be ambitious to be foremost in hurrying down the timber to Salem where the noble structure is to be fabricated to maintain your rights upon the seas and

make the name of America respected among the nations of the world. Your largest and longest trees are wanted, and the arms of them for knees and rising timber. Four trees are wanted for the keel, which altogether will measure 146 feet in length, and hew 16 inches square. Please to call on the subscriber who wants to make contracts for large or small quantities as may suit best and will pay the ready cash.

"ENOS BRIGGS.

"Salem, November 23, 1798."

So enthusiastic was the response to the call for material that Master Builder Enos Briggs was obliged to have this advertisement printed:

"THE SALEM FRIGATE

"Through the medium of the *Gazette* the subscriber pays his acknowledgements to the good people of the county of Essex for their spirited exertions in bringing down the trees of the forest for building the Frigate. In the short space of four weeks the complement of timber has been furnished. Those who have contributed to their country's defence are invited to come forward and receive the reward of their patriotism. They are informed that with permission of a kind Providence, who hath hitherto favored the undertaking,

Next September is the time
When we'll launch her from the strand
And our cannon load and prime
With tribute due to Talleyrand.

"ENOS BRIGGS.

"Salem, Jan. 1, 1799."

The great timbers for the ship's hull were cut in the "wood lots" of Danvers, Peabody, Beverly and other near-by towns of Essex county and hauled through the snowy streets of Salem on sleds drawn by slow-moving oxen, while the people cheered

them as they passed. The keel of the frigate was laid on the 13th of April, 1799, and she was launched five months and seventeen days later, on the 30th of September, Master Builder Briggs saving his reputation as a prophet by the narrowest possible margin.

The *Essex* was a Salem ship from keel to truck. Her cordage was made in three rope walks. Captain Jonathan Haraden, the most famous Salem privateersman of the Revolution, made the rigging for the mainmast at his factory in Brown Street. Joseph Vincent fitted out the foremast and Thomas Briggs the mizzenmast in their rigging lofts at the foot of the Common. When the huge hemp cables were ready to be carried to the frigate, the workmen who had made them conveyed them to the shipyard on their shoulders, the procession led by a fife and drum. Her sails were cut from duck woven for the purpose at Daniel Rust's factory in Broad Street, and her iron work was forged by the Salem shipsmiths. Six months before she slid into the harbor her white oak timbers were standing in the woodlands of Massachusetts.

The glorious event of her launching inspired the editor of the Salem *Gazette* to this flight of eulogy:

"And Adams said: 'Let there be a navy and there was a navy.' To build a navy was the advice of our venerable sage. How far it had been adhered to is demonstrated by almost every town in the United States that is capable of floating a galley or a gun-boat.

"Salem has not been backward in this laudable design. Impressed with a sense of the importance of a navy, the patriotic citizens of this town put out a subscription and thereby obtained an equivalent for building a vessel of force. Among the foremost in this good work were Messrs. Derby and Gray, who set the example by subscribing ten thousand dollars each. But alas, the former is no more—we trust his good deeds follow him.

"Such was the patriotic zeal with which our citizens were inspired, that in the short space of six months they contracted for the materials and equipment of a frigate of thirty-two guns, and had her complete for launching. The chief part of her timber was standing but six months ago, and in a moment as it were, 'every grove descended' and put in force the patriotic intentions of those at whose expense she was built.

"Yesterday the Stars and Stripes were unfurled on board the frigate *Essex* and at 12 o'clock she made a majestic movement into her destined element, there to join her sister craft in repelling foreign aggressions and maintaining the rights and liberties of a 'Great, Free, Powerful and Independent Nation.'

"The concourse of spectators was immense. The heart-felt satisfaction of the beholders of this magnificent spectacle was evinced by the concording shouts and huzzas of thousands which reiterated from every quarter.

"The unremitting zeal of Mr. Briggs, the architect of this beautiful ship, cannot be too highly applauded. His assiduity in bringing her into a state of such perfection in so short a time entitles him to the grateful thanks of his Country and we fondly hope his labors have not been spent in vain, for we may truly say that he has not 'given rest to the sole of his foot' since her keel was first laid. At least he will have the consolation of reflecting on the important service he has rendered his country in this notable undertaking."

The guns of the frigate had been planted on a near-by hill, and as she took the water they thundered a salute which was echoed by the cannon of armed merchant vessels in the harbor. This famous frigate, literally built by the American people, their prayers and hopes wrought into every timber of her with the labor of their own hands, cost a trifle less than $75,000 when turned over to the Government. The *Essex* was a large vessel for her time, measuring 850 tons. She was 146 feet in

length "over all," while her keel was 118 feet long. Her beam was 37 feet and her depth of hold 12 feet 3 inches. The height between her gun deck and lower deck was only 5 feet 9 inches. Her mainmast was 85 feet long with a head of 12 feet. Above this was a topmast 55 feet long with a head of $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet, and towering skyward from the topmast her topgallant mast of 40 feet with a head of 15 feet. Her mainyard was 80 feet long.

Rigged as a three-masted ship, with an unusual spread of canvas, the *Essex* must have been a rarely beautiful marine picture when under way. The handling of such a majestic fabric as one of these old-time men-of-war is mirrored in the song of "The Fancy Frigate" which describes how such a ship as this noble *Essex* was manned by the hundreds of tars who swarmed among her widespread yards:

"Now my brave boys comes the best of the fun,
All hands to make sail, going large is the song.
From under two reefs in our topsails we lie,
Like a cloud in the air, in an instant must fly.
There's topsails, topgallant sails, and staysails too,
There is stu'nsails and skysails, star gazers so high,
By the sound of one pipe everything it must fly.
Now, my brave boys, comes the best of the fun,
About ship and reef topsails in one.
All hands up aloft when the helm goes down,
Lower way topsails when the mainyard goes round.
Chase up and lie out and take two reefs in one,
In a moment of time all this work must be done.
Man your head braces, your haulyards and all,
And hoist away topsails when it's 'let go and haul,'
As for the use of tobacco all thoughts leave behind,
If you spit on the deck then your death warrant sign.
If you spit overboard either gangway or starn
You are sure of six dozen by way of no harm."

But before this "fancy frigate" of the American navy could get to sea, there was much to be done. Captain Richard Derby of Salem had been selected to command her, but he was abroad

in one of his own ships and could not return home in time to equip the frigate for active service. Therefore, Captain Edward Preble of the navy was offered the command, which he accepted and hastened to Salem to put his battery and stores aboard and recruit a crew. It is related that when Captain Preble saw the armament that had been prepared for his ship he found the gun carriages not at all to his liking.

"Who built those gun carriages," he angrily demanded of Master Builder Briggs.

"Deacon Gould," was the answer.

"Send for Deacon Gould to meet me at the Sun tavern this evening," ordered Captain Preble.

Deacon Gould made his appearance and found Captain Preble waiting with somewhat of irritation in his demeanor. The deacon was a man of the most dignified port and he asked:

"What may be your will, Captain Preble?"

"You do not know how to make gun carriages, sir," exclaimed the fighting sailor.

"What's that you say, Captain Preble. What's that you say?" thundered Deacon Gould. "I knew how to make gun carriages before you were born, and if you say that word again I will take you across my knee and play Master Hacker* with you, sir."

Both men were of a hair-trigger temper and a clash was prevented by friends who happened to be in the tavern. Captain Preble proceeded to have the gun carriages cut down to suit him, however, as may be learned from the following entry in his sea journal kept on board the *Essex:*

"26 12-pound cannon were taken on board for the main battery; mounted them and found the carriages all too high; dismounted the cannon and sent the carriages ashore to be altered."

* Master Hacker was a Salem schoolmaster of that time.

The battery of the *Essex* consisted of 26 12-pounders on the gun decks; 6 6-pounders on the quarter deck; 32 guns in all. During his first cruise at sea Captain Preble recommended to the Secretary of the Navy that 9-pounders replace the 6-pound guns on the quarterdeck which he thought strong enough to bear them, a tribute to honest construction by Master Builder Enos Briggs.

The official receipt of the acceptance of the *Essex* in behalf of the Government of the United States which Captain Preble gave the Salem committee reads as follows:

"The Committee for building a frigate in Salem for the United States having delivered to my charge the said frigate called the *Essex*, with her hull, masts, spars and rigging complete, and furnished her with one complete suit of sails, two bower cables and anchors, one stream cable and anchor, one hawser, and kedge anchor, one tow line, four boats and a full set of spare masts and spars except the lower masts and bowsprit, I have in behalf of the United States received the said frigate *Essex* and signed duplicate receipts for the same.

"Edward Preble, Captain, U. S. N.

"Salem, Dec. 17, 1799."

This receipt was not given until Captain Preble had taken time to make a thorough examination of the vessel, for his first letter to the Secretary of the Navy concerning the *Essex* was written on November 17th, more than a month earlier than the foregoing document. He reported on this previous date:

"Sir. I have the honor to inform you that I arrived here last evening and have taken charge of the *Essex*. She is now completely rigged, has all her ballast on board, and her stock of water will be nearly complete by to-morrow night. . . .

I am much in want of officers to attend the ship, and the recruiting service. I shall be obliged to open a rendezvous to-morrow to recruit men sufficient to make the ship safe at her anchors in case of a storm. I presume the *Essex* can be got ready for sea in thirty days if my recruiting instructions arrive soon. The agent, Mr. Waters, and the Committee are disposed to render me every assistance in their power.

"Very respectfully,

"Your obedient servant,

"Edward Preble, Capt.

"To the Hon. Secretary of the Navy, etc., etc."

In another letter with the foregoing address Captain Preble wrote:

"I beg leave to recommend Mr. Rufus Low of Cape Ann for Sailing Master of the *Essex*. He has served as captain of a merchant ship for several years and has made several voyages to India and sustains a good reputation. His principal inducement for soliciting this appointment is the injuries he has sustained by the French."

The crew of the *Essex*, officers and men, numbered two hundred and fifty when she went to sea. It was a ship's company of Americans of the English strain who had become native to the soil and cherished as hearty a hatred for the mother country as they did the most patriotic ardor for their new republic. There were only two "Macs" and one "O'" on the ship's muster rolls, and men and boys were almost without exception of seafaring New England stock. In a letter of instructions to Captain Preble, the Secretary of the Navy, Benjamin Stoddard, wrote of the proposed complement of the *Essex:*

"Sixty able bodied seamen, seventy-three ordinary seamen, thirty boys, fifty marines including officers. Able seamen $17 per month, ordinary seamen and boys $5 to $17."

Captain Preble was greatly pleased with the behavior of the frigate in her first "trying out" run from Salem to Newport. He wrote from sea to Joseph Waters:

"The *Essex* is a good sea boat and sails remarkably fast. She went eleven miles per hour with topgallant sails set and within six points of the wind."

He also wrote the Secretary of the Navy after leaving Newport:

"I have the honor to acquaint you that the *Essex* in coming out of the harbor sailed much faster than the *Congress*, and is, I think, in every respect a fine frigate."

Nor was this admiration limited to her own officers, for from the Cape of Good Hope, on her first deep-water cruise, Captain Preble wrote home:

"The *Essex* is much admired for the beauty of her construction by the officers of the British Navy."

In company with the frigate *Congress* the *Essex* sailed in January, 1800, for Batavia to convoy home a fleet of American merchantmen. Six days out the *Congress* was dismasted in a storm which the *Essex* weathered without damage and proceeded alone as the first American war vessel to double the Cape of Good Hope. Ten months later she reached the United States with her merchantmen. The *Essex* had not the good fortune to engage the enemy, for a treaty of peace with France was signed in February, 1801.

Captain Preble left the ship because of ill health, and in command of Captain Wm. Bainbridge, she joined the Mediterranean squadron of Commodore Richard Dale. She made two cruises in this service until 1805, and played a peaceful part on the naval list until the coming of the War of 1812. At that time the eighteen-gun ship *Wasp* was the only American war vessel on a foreign station. A small squadron was assembled at New York under Commodore Rodgers, comprising the

*President, Hornet* and *Essex*. Captain David Porter had been given command of the *Essex* and he sailed with this squadron which was later reinforced by the ships assembled with the pennant of Commodore Decatur. The *Essex* took several prizes, and fought a fierce single-ship action with H. B. M. ship *Alert* of twenty guns and 100 men, which he captured.

The immortal cruise of the *Essex* under David Porter began when he was ordered to meet Bainbridge's ships, the *Constellation* and *Hornet* in South American waters. Failing to find the squadron at the rendezvous in the South Atlantic, in April David Porter headed for Cape Horn and the Pacific in search of British commerce. Early in 1813 he was able to report:

"I have completely broke up the British navigation in the Pacific; the vessels which had not been captured by me were laid up and dared not venture out. I have afforded the most ample protection to our own vessels which were on my arrival very numerous and unprotected. The valuable whale fishery there is entirely destroyed and the actual injury we have done them may be estimated at two and a half million dollars, independent of the vessels in search of me.

"They have furnished me amply with sails, cordage, cables, anchors, provisions, medicines, and stores of every description; and the slops on board have furnished clothing for my seamen. I have in fact lived on the enemy since I have been in that sea, every prize having proved a well-found store ship for me."

In letters from Valparaiso Captain Porter was informed that a British squadron commanded by Commodore James Hillyar was seeking him. This force comprised the frigate *Phoebe* of thirty-six guns, the *Raccoon* and *Cherub*, sloops of war, and a store ship of twenty guns. "My ship, as it may be supposed after being near a year at sea," wrote Captain Porter, "required some repairs to put her in a state to meet them; which I deter-

mined to do and to bring them to action if I could meet them on nearly equal terms."

With this purpose in mind Captain Porter went in search of the British squadron. In his words: "I had done all the injury that could be done the British commerce in the Pacific, and still hoped to signalize my cruise by something more splendid before leaving that sea."

"Agreeably to his expectation," as Captain Porter phrased it, the *Phoebe* appeared at Valparaiso shortly after the arrival of the *Essex* in that port. But instead of offering a duel on even terms between the two frigates, the British Commodore brought with him the *Cherub* sloop of war. These two British vessels had a combined force of eighty-one guns and 500 men, as compared with the thirty-six guns and fewer than 300 men of the *Essex*. "Both ships had picked crews," said Captain Porter, "and were sent into the Pacific in company with the *Raccoon* of 32 guns and a store ship of 20 guns for the express purpose of seeking the *Essex*, and were prepared with flags bearing the motto, 'God and Country; British Sailors Best Rights; Traitors Offend Both.' This was intended as reply to my motto, 'Free Trade and Sailors' Rights,' under the erroneous impression that my crew were chiefly Englishmen, or to counteract its effect on their own crew . . . In reply to their motto, I wrote at my mizzen: 'God and Our Country; Tyrants Offend Them.'"

Alongside the *Essex* lay the *Essex, Junior*, an armed prize which carried twenty guns and sixty men. For six weeks the two American vessels lay in harbor while the British squadron cruised off shore to blockade them, "during which time, I endeavored to provoke a challenge," explained Captain Porter, "and frequently but ineffectually to bring the *Phoebe* alone to action, first with both my ships, and afterwards with my single ship with both crews on board. I was several times under

way and ascertained that I had greatly the advantage in point of sailing, and once succeeded in closing within gun shot of the *Phoebe*, and commenced a fire on her, when she ran down for the *Cherub* which was two miles and a half to leeward. This excited some surprise and expressions of indignation, as previous to my getting under way she hove to off the port, hoisted her motto flag and fired a gun to windward. Com. Hillyar seemed determined to avoid a contest with me on nearly equal terms and from his extreme prudence in keeping both his ships ever after constantly within hail of each other, there were no hopes of any advantages to my country from a long stay in port. I therefore determined to put to sea the first opportunity which should offer."

On the 28th of March, 1813, the day after this determination was formed, the wind blew so hard from the southward that the *Essex* parted her port cable, and dragged her starboard anchor out to sea. Not a moment was to be lost in getting sail on the ship to save her from stranding. Captain Porter saw a chance of crowding out to windward of the *Phoebe* and *Cherub*, but his maintopmast was carried away by a heavy squall, and in his disabled condition he tried to regain the port. Letting go his anchor in a small bay, within pistol shot of a neutral shore, he made haste to repair damages.

The *Phoebe* and *Cherub* bore down on the *Essex*, which was anchored in neutral water, their "motto flags," and union jacks flying from every masthead. The crippled *Essex* was made ready for action, and was attacked by both British ships at three o'clock in the afternoon. Describing the early part of the engagement Captain Porter reported to the Navy Department:

"My ship had received many injuries, and several had been killed and wounded; but my brave officers and men, notwithstanding the unfavorable circumstances under which we were brought to action and the powerful force opposed to us, were

in no way discouraged; and all appeared determined to defend their ship to the last extremity, and to die in preference to a shameful surrender. Our gaff with the ensign and the motto flag at the mizzen had been shot away, but 'Free Trade and Sailors' Rights' continued to fly at the fore. Our ensign was replaced by another and to guard against a similar event an ensign was made fast in the mizzen rigging, and several jacks were hoisted in different parts of the ship."

After hauling off to repair damages both the *Phoebe* and the *Cherub* stationed themselves on the starboard quarter of the *Essex* where her short carronades could not reach them and where her stern guns could not be brought to bear, for she was still at her forced anchorage. All the halyards of the *Essex* had been shot away, except those of the flying jib and with this sail hoisted the cable was cut and the stricken Yankee frigate staggered seaward with the intention of laying the *Phoebe* on board and fighting at close quarters.

For only a short time was Porter able to use his guns to advantage, however, for the *Cherub* was able to haul off at a distance and pound the *Essex* while the *Phoebe* picked her own range and shot the helpless frigate to pieces with her long eighteen-pounders. In the words of David Porter which seem worthy of quotation at some length:

"Many of my guns had been rendered useless by the enemy's shot, and many of them had their whole crews destroyed. We manned them again from those which were disabled and one gun in particular was three times manned—fifteen men were slain in the course of the action. Finding that the enemy had it in his power to choose his distance, I now gave up all hope of closing with him and as the wind for the moment seemed to favour the design, I determined to run her on shore, land my men, and destroy her."

But the wind shifted from landward and carried the *Essex*

toward the *Phoebe*, "when we were again exposed to a dreadful raking fire. My ship was now totally unmanageable; yet as her head was toward the enemy and he to leeward of me, I still hoped to be able to board him." This attempt failed, and a little later, the ship having caught fire in several places, "the crew who had by this time become so weakened that they all declared to me the impossibility of making further resistance, and entreated me to surrender my ship to save the wounded, as all further attempt at opposition must prove ineffectual, almost every gun being disabled by the destruction of their crew.

"I now sent for the officers of division to consult them and what was my surprise to find only acting Lieutenant Stephen Decatur M'Knight remaining . . . I was informed that the cockpit, the steerage, the wardroom and the berth deck could contain no more wounded, that the wounded were killed while the surgeons were dressing them, and that if something was not speedily done to prevent it, the ship would soon sink from the number of shot holes in her bottom. On sending for the carpenter he informed me that all his crew had been killed or wounded . . .

"The enemy from the smoothness of the water and the impossibility of reaching him with our carronades and the little apprehension that was excited by our fire, which had now become much slackened, was enabled to take aim at us as at a target; his shot never missed our hull and my ship was cut up in a manner which was perhaps never before witnessed; in fine, I saw no hopes of saving her, and at 20 minutes after 6 P. M. I gave the painful order to strike the colours. Seventy-five men, including officers, were all that remained of my whole crew after the action capable of doing duty and many of them severely wounded, some of them whom have since died. The enemy still continued his fire, and my brave, though unfortu-

nate companions were still falling about me. I directed an opposite gun to be fired to show them we intended no farther resistance, but they did not desist; four men were killed at my side, and others at different parts of the ship. I now believed he intended to show us no quarter, that it would be as well to die with my flag flying as struck, and was on the point of again hoisting it when about 10 minutes after hauling down the colours he ceased firing."

Of a crew of 255 men who went into action, the *Essex* lost in killed, wounded, and missing no fewer than 153 officers, seamen and marines, including among the list of "slightly wounded" no less a name than that of "David G. Farragut, midshipman," who was destined to serve his country a full half century longer on the sea before his great chance should come to him on the quarterdeck of the *Hartford* in the Civil War.

Captain David Porter had been overmatched, fighting his crippled ship against hopeless odds until his decks were such an appalling scene of slaughter as has been recorded of few naval actions in history. But the Salem-built frigate *Essex* had fulfilled her destiny in a manner to make her nation proud unto this day of the men who sailed and fought her in the harbor of Valparaiso, many thousand miles from the New England shipyard where a patriotic town of seafarers had united with one common purpose to serve their country as best they could.

There was grief and indignation beyond words when the tidings reached Salem that the *Essex* had been taken, and bitter wrath against England was kindled by the conviction, right or wrong, that Commodore Hillyar had not played the part of an honorable foe in pitting both his fighting ships against the Yankee frigate. This impression was confirmed by that part of Captain Porter's official report which read:

"We have been unfortunate but not disgraced—the defence of the *Essex* had not been less honourable to her officers and

crew than the capture of an equal force; and I now consider my situation less unpleasant than that of Com. Hillyar, who in violation of every principle of honour and generosity, and regardless of the rights of nations, attacked the *Essex* in her crippled state within pistol shot of a neutral shore, when for six weeks I had daily offered him fair and honourable combat on terms greatly to his advantage. The blood of the slain must rest on his head; and he has yet to reconcile his conduct to heaven, to his conscience, and to the world."

In a later letter to the Secretary of the Navy Captain Porter added these charges:

"Sir: There are some facts relating to our enemy and although not connected with the action, serve to shew his perfidy and should be known.

"On Com. Hillyar's arrival at Valparaiso he ran the *Phoebe* close alongside the *Essex*, and inquired politely after my health, observing that his ship was cleared for action and his men prepared for boarding. I observed: 'Sir, if you by any accident get on board of me, I assure you that great confusion will take place; I am prepared to receive you and shall act only on the defensive.' He observed coolly and indifferently. 'Oh, sir, I have no such intention'; at this instant his ship took aback of my starboard bow, her yards nearly locking with those of the *Essex*, and in an instant my crew was ready to spring on her decks.

"Com. Hillyar exclaimed in great agitation: 'I had no intention of coming so near you; I am sorry I came so near you.' His ship fell off with her jib-boom over my stern; her bows exposed to my broadside, her stern to the stern fire of the *Essex*, *Junior*, her crew in the greatest confusion, and in fifteen minutes I could have taken or destroyed her. After he had brought his ship to anchor, Com. Hillyar and Capt. Tucker of the *Cherub* visited me on shore; when I asked him if he intended

to respect the neutrality of the port: 'Sir,' said he, 'you have paid such respect to the neutrality of this port that I feel myself bound in honour, to do the same.'"

The behavior of Commander Hillyar after the action was most humane and courteous, and the lapse of time has sufficed to dispel somewhat of the bitterness of the American view-point toward him. If he was not as chivalrous as his Yankee foeman believed to be demanded of the circumstances, he did his stern duty in destroying the *Essex* with as great advantage to himself as possible. Captain Porter had shown no mercy toward English shipping, and he was a menace to the British commerce, which must be put out of the way. The inflamed spirit of the American people at that time, however, was illustrated in a "broadside," or printed ballad displayed on the streets of Salem. This fiery document was entitled:

"Capture of the Essex

"Free Trade and Sailors' Rights.

"Or, the In-glorious victory of the British with the *Phoebe*, Frigate, of 36 guns and 320 men and the *Cherub*, sloop of war, with 28 guns, and 180 men over the unfortunate *Essex*, Frigate of 32 guns and 255 men. Commanded by Captain *David Porter*. An action fought two hours and 57 minutes against a double complement of Men and force, by an enterprising and veteran Crew of Yankees."

The closing verses of this superheated ballad were:

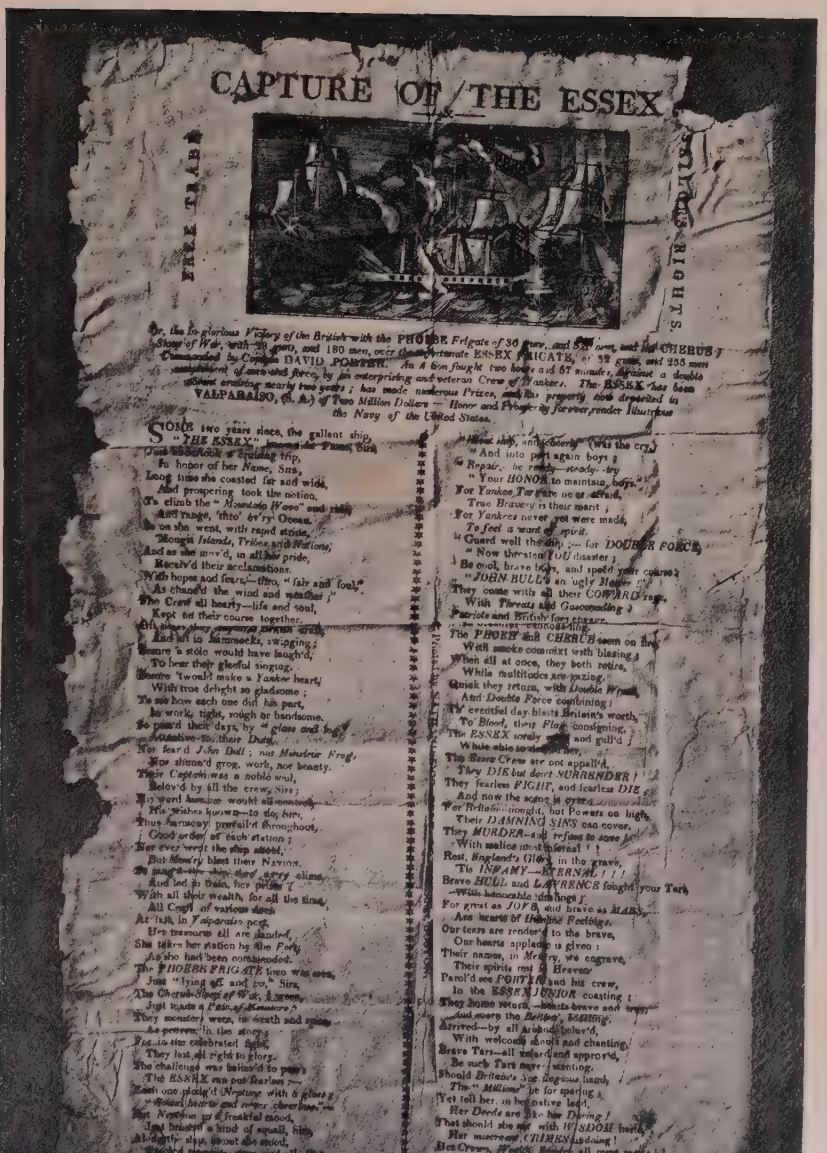
"The Essex sorely rak'd and gall'd;
While able to defend her
The *Essex Crew* are not appall'd
They Die but *don't* Surrender!
They fearless Fight, and Fearless Die!
And now the scene is over;

For *Britain*, Nought but *Powers* on high
Their DAMNING SINS can Cover.
They MURDER and refuse to *save!*
With Malice Most infernal! !
Rest, *England's Glory* in the Grave,
'Tis INFAMY—ETERNAL! ! !
Brave HULL and LAWRENCE fought your Tars
With honorable dealings;
For great as JOVE and brave as MARS
Are hearts of *Humane Feelings*
Our tears are render'd to the brave,
Our hearts' applause is given;
Their Names in Mem'ry we engrave,
Their spirits rest in Heaven;
Paroled see PORTER and his crew
In the ESSEX JUNIOR coasting;
They home return—hearts brave and true,
And scorn the *Britons* boasting—
Arrived—by all around belov'd,
With welcome shouts and chanting,
Brave Tars—all valiant and approv'd,
Be such Tars never Wanting.
Should Britain's *Sacrilegious* band
Yet tell her in her native land
Her *Deeds* are like her *Daring*,
That should she *not* with WISDOM haste
Her *miscreant* CRIMES undoing,
Her *Crown*, *Wealth*, *Empire*, *all* must waste
And sink in common RUIN."

One of the seamen of the *Essex* returned to his home at the end of the cruise and told these incidents of his shipmates as they have been preserved in the traditions of the town:

"John Ripley after losing his leg said: 'Farewell, boys, I can be of no use to you,' and flung himself overboard out of the bow port.

"John Alvinson received an eighteen-pound ball through the body; in the agony of death he exclaimed: 'Never mind, shipmates. I die in defence of 'Free Trade and Sailors' Rights' and expired with the word 'Rights' quivering on his lips.


CAPTURE OF THE ESSEX
FREE TRADE
SEAMEN'S RIGHTS
Or, the Inglorious Victory of the British with the PHOEBE Frigate of 36 guns, and 320 men, and the CHERUB Sloop of War, with 28 guns, and 180 men, over the unfortunate ESSEX FRIGATE, of 32 guns, and 255 men
Commanded by Captain DAVID PORTER. In a fair fought two hours and 57 minutes, against a double
VALPARAISO, (S. A.) of Two Million Dollars — Honor and Praise to forever render illustrious
the Navy of the United States.
SOME two years since, the gallant ship,
"THE ESSEX" launched her Keel,
And HANCOCK a Trading trip,
In honor of her Name, Sirs,
Long time she coasted far and wide,
And prospering took the notion,
To climb the "Mountain Wave" and ride
And range, 'thro' ev'ry Ocean,
So on she went, with rapid stride,
Mongst Islands, Tribes, and Nations;
And as she mov'd, in all her pride,
Receiv'd their acclamations.
With hopes and fears,—thro, "fair and foul,"
As chang'd the wind and weather;
The Crew all hearty—life and soul,
Kept on their course together.
Oft times, they sang our native airs,
And sat in hammocks, swinging;
Secure a stole would have laugh'd,
To hear their gleeful singing.
Hence 'twould make a Yankee heart,
With true delight so gladsome;
To see how each one did his part,
In work, tight, rough or handsome.
So pass'd their days, by "glass and bell,"
Attentive to their Duty,
Not fear'd John Bull; not Monsieur Frog,
Nor shunn'd grog, work, nor beauty.
Their Captain was a noble soul,
Belov'd by all the crew, Sirs;
By word humane would all control,
His wishes knew—to do him,
Thus harmony prevail'd throughout,
Good order, at each station;
Nor ever wreck the ship about,
But Mem'ry blest their NATION.
To gauge the ship and every clime,
And lad in train, her power;
With all their wealth, for all the time,
All Coast of various climb
At last, in Valparaiso port,
Her treasures all are granted,
She takes her station by the Fort,
As she hath been commanded.
The PHOEBE FRIGATE two was seen,
Just "lying off and on," Sirs,
The Cherub Sloop of War, I ween,
Just made a Pair of Runners;
They monitors were, in wrath and spite—
As proven in the story;
For in the celebrated fight,
They lost all right to glory.
The challenge was believ'd to pass
The ESSEX ran put fearless on—
Each one playing it Neptune with a glass;
"Avast, heave and never shew how,"
But Neptune in a freakful mood,
Had brushed a kind of squall, him,
And the ships about she stood,
Shook a topsail, stays, and all, Sirs.
"Haul ship, and cheerly" (was the cry,)
"And into port again boys;
"Repair,—be ready—steady—try
"Your HONOR to maintain, boys."
For Yankee Tar gave no ne'er afraid,
True Bravery in their mant;
For Yankees never yet were made,
To feel a want of spirit.
"Guard well the ship,—for DOUBLE FORCE,
"Now threaten YOU disaster;
Be cool, brave boys, and speed your course
"JOHN BULL'S an ugly Master."
They come with all their COWARD rage,
With Threats and Gasconading;
Patriots and Britons fore engage,
The PHOEBE and CHERUB seem on fire,
With smoke commixt with blazing;
Then all at once, they both retire,
While multitudes are gazing.
Quick they return, with Double Wrath,
And Double Force combining;
To wrestled day blasts Britain's worth,
To Blood, their Flag consigning.
The ESSEX sorely [illegible] and gall'd;
While able to do either,
The Brave Crew are not appall'd,
They DIE but don't SURRENDER!
They fearless FIGHT, and fearless DIE,
And now the scene is open,
For Britain thought, but Powers on high,
Their DAMNING SINS can cover.
They MURDER—and refuses to save
With malice most infernal!!
Rest, England's Glory, in the grave,
Tis INFAMY—ETERNAL!!!
Brave HULL and LAWRENCE fought your Tars,
With honorable daring;
For great as JOY'S, and brave as MARS,
Are wards of Hearing Feelings.
Our tears are rendered to the brave,
Our hearts applause is given:
Their names, in Mem'ry, we engrave,
Their spirits rest in Heaven.
Parol'd are PORTER and his crew,
In the ESSEX JUNIOR coasting;
They home return,—hearts brave and true,
And scorn the Britons' hosting.
Arrived—by all around, belov'd,
With welcome shouts and chanting,
Brave Tars—all valor'd and approv'd,
Be such Tars ever wanting.
Should Britain's Sea Inglorious lunch,
The "Millions" pit for sparing;
Yet tell her, in her native land,
Her Deeds are like her Daring!
That should she war with WISDOM hurl,
Her miscreant CRIMES invading!
Her Crown, Wealth, Empire, all must wane!!
And sink, in endless RUIN!!!

Broadside ballad published in Salem after the news was received of the loss of the *Essex*

"James Anderson had his left leg shot off and died encouraging his comrades to fight bravely in defence of liberty. After the engagement Benjamin Hazen, having dressed himself in a clean shirt and jerkin, told what messmates of his that were left that he could never submit to be taken as a prisoner by the English and leaped into the sea where he was drowned."

# CHAPTER XI

## THE FIRST AMERICAN VOYAGERS TO JAPAN

## (1799–1801)

IT is commonly assumed that until the memorable visit of Commodore Perry's squadron in 1853 shattered the ancient isolation of Japan, no American ships had ever been permitted to trade or tarry in a port of that nation. More than half a century, however, before the tenacious diplomacy of Matthew C. Perry had wrested a treaty of "friendship and commerce," at least three New England vessels had carried cargoes to and from Nagasaki.

The sloop *Lady Washington* had merely touched in a harbor of Japan in 1791 while accompanying the ship *Columbia* on her voyage around the world. In 1797 the ship *Eliza* of New York had been chartered by the Dutch East India Company for a trading voyage to Japan, but left a scanty record of it. It was in 1799 that the ship *Franklin*, owned in Boston but commanded by Captain James Devereux of Salem, won the historical distinction of being one of the earliest American vessels to find a friendly greeting among the Japanese.

In 1800, the Boston ship *Massachusetts* sailed for Nagasaki on a like errand. Her captain's clerk, William Cleveland of Salem, kept a detailed journal of this unusual voyage, which record, because of its length, is dealt with in a separate chapter following the account of the adventures of the *Franklin* and also of the Salem ship *Margaret* which went from Batavia to Nagasaki in 1801.

In the logs and journals of these three voyages has been preserved a wealth of adventure, incident and description which

to-day sound as archaic as a chapter of the history of the Middle Ages in Europe. Excepting a handful of Dutch traders, these three ships visited a land as strange and unknown to the outside world as was the heart of Thibet a dozen years ago. They sailed to the Orient as pioneers of American commerce, and while at Batavia seeking cargo were chartered by the Dutch East India Company for the annual voyage to Japan.

When the ship *Franklin* set sail from Batavia for Nagasaki, in 1799, only the Dutch were permitted to hold foreign intercourse with the land of the Shoguns and the Samurai. They had maintained their singular commercial monopoly for two centuries at a price which was measured in the deepest degradation of national and individual dignity and self-respect. The few Dutch merchants suffered to reside in Japan were little better off than prisoners, restricted to a small island in Nagasaki harbor, leaving it only once in four years when the Resident, or chief agent, journeyed to Yeddo to offer gifts and obeisance to the Shogun. At this audience, which took place in the "Hall of a Hundred Mats," the Dutch Resident "crept forward on his hands and feet, and falling on his knees bowed his head to the ground and retired again in absolute silence, crawling exactly like a crab." To add insult to injury, the Shogun usually sat hidden behind a curtain.

After this exhibition the envoys were led further into the palace and ordered to amuse the Court. "Now we had to rise and walk to and fro, now to exchange compliments with each other," wrote one of them, "then to dance, jump, represent a drunken man, speak broken Japanese, paint, read Dutch, German, sing, put on our cloaks and throw them off again, etc., I, for my part, singing a German love ditty."

Of their life on the islet of Dezima, where the little colony of Dutch traders was guarded and confined, this same chronicler, Kaempfer, remarks:

"In this service we have to put up with many insulting regulations at the hands of these proud heathens. We may not keep Sundays or fast days, or allow our spiritual hymns or prayers to be heard; never mention the name of Christ, nor carry with us any representation of the Cross or any external sign of Christianity. Besides these things we have to submit to many other insulting imputations which are always painful to a noble heart. The reason which impels the Dutch to bear all these sufferings so patiently is simply the love of gain."

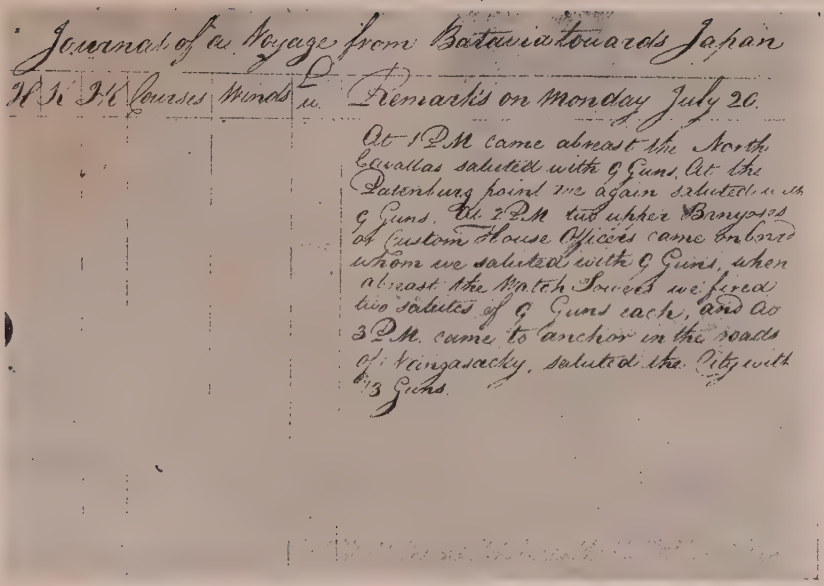
In return for these humiliations the Dutch East India Company was permitted to send one or two ships a year from Batavia to Japan and to export a cargo of copper, silk, gold, camphor, porcelain and bronze which returned immense profits.

This curious system of commerce was in operation when the ship *Franklin* cleared from Boston for Batavia in 1798. His owner's letter of instructions ordered Captain Devereux to load Java coffee in bulk and to return with all possible expedition. As was customary, the ship's company was given a share in the profits of the voyage, as defined in a letter to the captain:

"We allow your first and second officers two and one-half tons privilege, and one ton to your third mate, your sailors will be allowed to bring their adventures in their chests and not otherwise. Your own privilege will be five per cent. of the whole amount which the ship may bring and 'tis our orders that she be completely filled."

When Captain Devereux arrived at Batavia in April, 1799, he learned that the Dutch East India Company was in need of a ship to make one of the annual voyages to Japan. The Salem shipmaster and his supercargo perceived that a large extra profit could be gleaned in such a venture as this, after which the ship might return for her cargo of coffee and go home to Boston as planned.

This Batavia charter was an attractive adventure which



Journal of a Voyage from Batavia towards Japan

| H | K | F.K | Courses | Winds | £ | Remarks on Monday July 20. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | At 1 P.M came abreast the North Cavallas saluted with 9 Guns. At the Patenburg point we again saluted with 9 Guns. At 2 P.M two upper Banyoses or Custom House Officers came on board whom we saluted with 9 Guns, when abreast the Watch Towers we fired two salutes of 9 Guns each, and at 3 P.M. came to anchor in the roads of Nangasacky, saluted the City with 13 Guns. |

Page from the log of the *Margaret*, describing her arrival at Nagasaki and the prodigious amount of saluting required

The good ship *Franklin*

promised to fatten both the owner's returns and the "privileges" of the ship's company, and after considerable preliminary skirmishing between the hard-headed Dutchmen and the keen-witted Yankee seafarers, an agreement was reached which has been preserved in the log of the *Franklin*. It is a valuable fragment of history in itself, for it recites the elaborate formalities and restrictions imposed upon foreign visitors by the Japanese of a century and more ago. The document is entitled:

"The Ship *Franklin's* Charter Party for a Voyage from Batavia to Japan, June the 16th, 1799."

It begins as follows:

"We, the undersigned, Johannes Siberg, Commissary General, etc., etc., on the one part, and Walter Burling, supercargo of the American ship *Franklin* at present at anchor in this Road, of the burthen of 200 tons, commanded by James Devereux, on the other part, do Declare and Certify to have agreed with respect to the Charter of said ship as follows."

It is then stipulated in the articles that the *Franklin* shall carry to Japan a cargo of cloves in sacks, cotton yarns, pieces of chintz, sugar, tin, black pepper, sapan-wood, elephants' teeth, and mummie, and supplies for the Company's agents in Nagasaki. The vessel is to bring back to Batavia a cargo of copper, camphor, boxes and boards. Her charter price or freight is to be paid Captain Devereux in coffee, sugar, black pepper, cloves, indigo, tin, cinnamon and nutmegs.

After no fewer than ten numbered articles of instruction it is provided that "the Capt., James Devereux, as soon as the cargo shall be on board and his ship's company in a proper situation, shall proceed with his said ship to the port of her destination and there being discharged and reloaded shall continue his voyage with the utmost diligence toward this metropolis, and that he shall not under any pretext whatever, approach or enter into any other port, either on his passage to

Japan or on his return, unless he is forced by urgent necessity which he must justify on his return in a satisfactory manner."

It would seem that not even the Dutch were always certain of a hospitable reception at the hands of the haughty Japanese, for in "article 13th" it is stated that "if by any unforeseen circumstances the ship should not be allowed to enter the port of Japan, and by that reason the Captain should be obliged to return with the cargo he took from here, then after his arrival here, and having discharged the cargo he took away, the freighter shall pay the freight agreed upon, of thirty thousand piasters in produce as mentioned in article 4th."

The thrifty Dutch inserted an article to read:

"If any of the ship's company should be sick at Japan they may be received in the Hospital on condition that they shall be taken on board the ship at the time of her departure, and the expense incurred will be for account of the letter (the ship)."

Having endeavored to protect themselves against every chance of loss or delay in a document well nigh as long as the Declaration of Independence, the officials in Batavia drew up the following letter:

"Instructions from the Dutch East India Company for Captain James Devereux on his arrival at Japan:

"When you get to the latitude of 26 or 27, it will be necessary to have everything in readiness to comply with the ceremonies which the Japanese are accustomed to see performed by the ships of the Company.

"1st. You will have all your colors in order to dress the ship on her entrance into port.

"2nd. There must be a table prepared on the quarterdeck which must be covered with a piece of cloth and two cushions for the officers to sit upon when they come on board.

"3rd. It is indispensably necessary to have a list of all the people on board, passengers and officers, their stations and age.

"4th. All the books of the people and officers, particularly religious books must be put into a cask and headed up; the officers from the shore will put their seals upon the cask and take it on shore, and on the departure of the ship will bring it on board without having opened it.

"Before your arrival at Japan you must make the people deliver you their money and keep it until your departure; this will not be attended with inconvenience as at Japan nothing is bought for cash, but they may change their specie for cambang money, and then make their trade, but this must be done by the Captain.

"6th. When you are in sight of Japan, you must hoist a Dutch pendant and ensign in their proper places as if you were a Dutch ship.

"7th. When the Cavalles are on your starboard hand and the Island of Japan on your larboard you must salute the guard on the Cavalles with nine guns.

"8th. After that you pass on the larboard side of Papenburg and salute with nine guns.

"9th. You then pass the guards of the Emperor on the starboard and larboard nearly at the same time, and salute them with 7 or 9 guns, the first all starboard guns, the second all larboard.

"10th. You then advance into the Road of Nangazacky (Nagasaki), and after anchoring salute with 13 guns.

"11th. When you enter the Cavalles, the Commissaries of the Chief will come on board and you must salute them with 9 guns; at the same time, if it is practicable, hoist some colors to the yards as a compliment to them; it is immaterial what colors you dress your ship with except Spanish or Portuguese —it is, however, necessary to recollect that the Dutch colors must be always in their proper place as if the ship was of that nation

"12th. When the Commissaries return on shore, you must salute them with nine guns.

"13th. You must be very particular in letting the boats which are around the ship know when you are going to fire as if you were to hurt any of them the consequences would be very important.

"14th. After you have anchored and saluted the harbor, the officers examine the list of your people and compare them with the number on board. After having received them those who wish it can go on shore, but before the Japanese land, all the arms and ammunition must be sent on shore, and it will be proper that everything of the kind should be landed, as they search the ship after she is unloaded. On your departure they will return it all on board. If there should by any mistake be any powder or firearms left on board, you must be very careful that not so much as a pistol be fired until the return of the ammunition which was landed.

"The agents of the Company will instruct you respecting the other ceremonies to be observed."

Captain Devereux's log records that he burned the prodigious amount of powder required and successfully steered a course through the other complex ceremonies, nautical and commercial, without ruffling Japanese dignity in any way. The *Franklin* lay in Nagasaki harbor for almost four months after which she returned to Batavia, to the satisfaction of the East India Company. Thence she sailed for Boston with so large a cargo of coffee, sugar and spices that it overflowed the hold and filled the after cabin. The captain and officers berthed in a makeshift "coach-house" knocked together on deck, but made no complaint as their several "adventures" had been richly increased by the voyage and trading with the Japanese.

In more than one stout old Salem mansion are treasured souvenirs of the voyage of the *Franklin*. According to a

memorandum of "a sale of sundries received by ship *Franklin* from Japan, Captain Devereux brought home as part of his adventure, "cabinets, tea trays, boxes of birds, waiters, boxes of fans, nests of pans, camphor wood, mats, kuspidors, together with inlaid tables and carved screens."

In 1801, or two years later, the *Margaret* of Salem lay in Nagasaki as a chartered trader. George Cleveland, of a famous family of Salem mariners, who sailed as the captain's clerk, kept the log and journal of this voyage, and his narrative contains much of interest concerning the early relations between the Japanese and the people of other countries.

"In the autumn of 1800," he wrote soon after his return, "the ship *Margaret*, built by Mr. Becket of this town, and owned by the late Col. Benj. Pickman, John Derby, Esq., and Captain Samuel Derby who was to command her, was launched. On the 25th November we left Salem harbor bound for the East Indies, and probably a finer, a better-fitted or better-manned ship never left this port before. We carried 6 guns and 20 men; most of the crew were fine young men in the bloom of youth. I will enumerate those who lived many years after, namely: S. G. Derby, captain; Thomas West, second mate; L. Stetson, carpenter; Samuel Ray, Joseph Preston, Israel Phippen, Anthony D. Caulfield and P. Dwyer, Thatcher and myself.

"We soon found on leaving port what a fast sailing ship the *Margaret* was. When we were out eleven days we fell in with the barque *Two Brothers*, Captain John Holman, who had left Salem some days before us, bound for Leghorn. We made him ahead in the afternoon steering the same course we were, and before night we were up alongside and spoke him. The next day we fell in with a fleet of merchantmen, convoyed by a frigate which was under very short sail, and kept all snug until she had got into our wake, when she set sail in chase, but we

distanced her so much that in a very short time she gave it up and took in her sails and rejoined the fleet.

"On the 4th of February, 1801, we anchored in Table Bay, Cape of Good Hope. We saluted the Admiral's flag, which civility was returned. On the 10th February we left, bound to Sumatra, and found it difficult to get to the westward as winds and currents were against us. After a tedious passage we anchored in Bencoolen Roads, 136 days from Salem, including our stoppage at the Cape. As nothing could be done to advantage here we proceeded to Batavia and arrived there on the 25th of April.

"Captain Derby soon made a bargain with the agents of the East India Company to take the annual freights to and from Japan, and as it was the custom from time immemorial that the Japan ship should sail on a certain day, and as that day was some time ahead, it was necessary to find some employment for the vessel previously, as it was dangerous to the health of crews to be lying any time in Batavia Roads. The Company offered Captain Derby a freight of coffee from a port a short distance to the eastward, which he readily accepted. This wore away twelve or fourteen days of the time, and added to the profits of the voyage.

"The cargo for Japan consisted of a great variety of articles, such as the Dutch had been in the habit of shipping for nearly two centuries. It was composed of sugar, spices, sapan wood, sandal wood, rattans, glassware, cloths, medicines, and various other articles, and as everything was to be done according to a prescribed rule, and as we were not to sail until a certain day in June, we had time enough to do all things right as regards receiving and stowing the cargo.

"We weighed anchor at 8 A. M., on the 20th June, 1801. We had as passenger a young Dutchman who was going out as clerk to the establishment in Japan. On the morning of

July 16th, we made the islands of Casique and St. Clara which are near the harbor of Nangasacca (Nagasaki), our destined port. On the 18th two fishing boats came alongside and supplied us with fish. On Sunday, 19th, we were so near that we hoisted twenty different colors and in the afternoon entered the harbour of Nangasacca. We had much ceremony to go through in entering this port, which is considered indispensable, among other things to fire several salutes.

"The day after our arrival I landed on the Island of Decima,* a little island connected with the city of Nangasacca by a bridge. It is walled all round and here the Dutch residents are obliged to pass their lives. Provisions are very dear and everything had to be passed through the hands of a compradore and he, no doubt, put upon them a large profit. We had excellent sweet potatoes and mackerel, and sometimes pork and fowls, and the bread was as good as any country could produce.

"Captain Derby, Mr. West and myself carried several articles of merchandise on our own account. This has always been allowed to the Dutch captains, but then the sale of these articles must be made by the Japanese government. All these articles were landed on the island, opened and displayed in a warehouse and on certain days the (Japanese) merchants were allowed to go on the Island to examine them. Nothing could exceed the minuteness with which they examined everything. Among other articles we had a quantity of tumblers and wine glasses; these they measured with the greatest care, running their fingers over every part to determine what irregularities there were on the surface, and then holding each piece up to the light to see the colour. They also made drawings of the different description of pieces.

* The name of this island is spelled Decima, Disma, Deshima, by the sailor diarists. In the official records of Commodore Perry's voyage it is spelled Dezima.

"After this investigatlon they marked on their memorandums the number of the lot and the results of their investigations. Everything we had to sell went through a similar ordeal so that to us, who were lookers on and owners of the property, nothing could be more tedious. After the goods had been sufficiently examined, a day was appointed for a sale, in the city of Nangasacca, and was conducted with the greatest fairness. Captain Derby and myself went into the city attended by the requisite number of officers, and proceeded to what the Dutch call the Geltchamber where we found one or more of the upper Banyoses* seated in their usual state, and a general attendance of merchants. We were placed where we could see all that was going on and received such explanations as were requisite to an understanding of the whole business. The goods being all disposed of, we were escorted back to the Island with much formality, not however, until a day had been appointed by the great men for the delivery of the goods.

"Delivering these adventures was a great affair, and it was a number of days before the whole was taken away. No person in this country (who has not traded with people who have so little intercourse with the world) can have an idea of the trouble we had in delivering this little invoice which would not have been an hour's work in Salem. We finally, after a great trial of our patience, finished delivering goods, and articles that did not come up to the pattern were taken at diminished prices.

"On the 20th September, 1801, we went into the city of Nangasacca. The first place we went to was Facquia's, an eminent stuff merchant. Here we were received with great politeness and entertained in such a manner as we little expected. We had set before us for a repast, pork, fowls, eggs, boiled fish, sweetmeats, cakes, various kinds of fruit, sakey and tea. The lady of the house was introduced, who drank tea with each of

* Magistrates or police officers.

View of Nagasaki before Japan was opened to commerce, showing the island of Deshima and the Dutch trading post

us as is the custom of Japan. She appeared to be a modest woman.

"The place we next visited was a temple to which we ascended by at least two hundred stone steps. We saw nothing very remarkable in this building excepting its size, which was very large, though in fact we were only admitted to an outer apartment as there appeared to be religious ceremonies going on within. Adjoining this was the burying-ground. In this ground was the tomb of one of their Governors, which was made of stone and very beautifully wrought. We next visited another temple also on the side of a hill and built of stone. The inside presented a great degree of neatness. It consisted of a great many apartments, in some of which were images; in one, a kind of altar, was a lamp which was continually burning. In another were several long pieces of boards, painted black with an inscription to the memory of some deceased Emperor or Governor. Before each of these was a cup of tea which they informed us was renewed every day. There were other apartments which the priests probably occupied, as there were many of them passing in and out. They are dressed like the other Japanese, excepting that their outside garments were all black and their heads shaved all over.

"From this we went to the glass house which was on a small scale, thence to a lacquer merchants where we were entertained with great hospitality. Thence we went to a tea-house or hotel where we dined. After dinner we were entertained with various feats of dancing and tumbling. Toward dark we returned to the Island and so much was the crowd in the streets to see us pass that it was with difficulty that we could get along. The number of children we saw was truly astonishing. The streets of the city are narrow and inconvenient to walk in as they are covered with loose stones as large as paving stones. At short distances vou have to go up or down flights of stone steps. At the

end of every street is a gate which is locked at night. They have no kinds of carriages, for it would be impossible to use them in such streets.

"The houses are one or two stories, built of wood; the exterior appearance is mean, but within they are very clean and neat. The floors are covered with mats, and it is considered a piece of ill manners to tread on them without first taking off the shoes. The Japanese dress much alike. That of the man consists first of a loose gown which comes down as low as the ankles; over this is worn a kind of petticoat which comes as low as the other; these are made of silk or cotton. The petticoat does not go higher than the hips. Over the shoulders they wear a shawl, generally of black crape, and around the waist a band of silk or cotton. Through this band the officers of the government put their swords, and they are the only persons allowed to carry these instruments.

"The middle part of the head is all shaved, the remaining hair which is left on each side and behind, is then combed together and made very stiff with gum mixed with oil, and then turned up on top of the head in a little club almost as large as a man's thumb. This is the universal fashion with rich and poor, excepting the priests.

"The poorer classes do not wear the silk petticoat and the coolies and other laborers at the time we were there, threw all their clothing off excepting a cloth around their middle when at work. The dress of the woman is the long gown with large sleeves, and is very like that of the men. They suffer the hair to grow long, which is made stiff with gum and oil and then is turned up on top of the head where it is secured with various turtle-shell ornaments.

"The Japanese observed one fast when we were there. It was in remembrance of the dead. The ceremonies were principally in the night. The first of which was devoted to feasting,

at which they fancy their departed friends to be present; the second and third nights the graves which are lighted with paper lamps and situated on the side of a hill make a brilliant appearance. On the fourth night at 3 o'clock the lamps are all brought down to the water and put into small straw barques with paper sails, made for the occasion, and after putting in rice, fruit, etc., they are set afloat. This exhibition is very fine. On the death of their parents they abstain from flesh and fish forty-nine days and on the anniversary they keep the same fast, but do not do it for any other relations.

"As the time was approaching for our departure we began to receive our returns from the interior brought many hundred miles. These consisted of the most beautiful lacquered ware, such as waiters, writing desks, tea-caddies, knife boxes, tables, etc. These were packed in boxes so neat that in any other country they would be considered cabinet work. We also received a great variety of porcelain, and house brooms of superior quality. The East India Company's cargo had been loading some time previous.

"The Company's ships have been obliged to take their departure from the anchorage opposite Nangasacca on a certain day to the lower roads, no matter whether it blew high or low, fair or foul, even if a gale, and a thousand boats should be required to tow them down. We of course had to do as our predecessors had done. Early in November we went to this anchorage and remained a few days when we sailed for Batavia where we arrived safely after a passage of one month."

Thus did one of the first Americans that ever invaded Japan with a note-book record his random impressions. He and his shipmates saw the old Japan of a feudal age, generations before the jinrickshaw and the Cook's tourist swarmed in the streets of Nagasaki. Japanese customs have been overturned since then. The men no longer wear their hair "turned up on top of the

head in a little club," but have succumbed to the scissors and the cropped thatch of the European. In the modern Japan, however, which builds her own battleships and railroads, there still survives the imaginative sentiment that sets afloat the "little straw barques with paper sails," illumined with "paper lamps" freighting offerings to the memories and spirits of the dead. The twentieth century tourist on the deck of a Pacific liner in the Inland Sea may sight these fragile argosies drifting like butterflies to unknown ports, just as young George Cleveland watched them in Nagasaki harbor.

The Yankee seamen were more cordially received than other and later visitors. Six years after the voyage of the *Margaret* the English sloop-of-war *Phaeton* appeared off the coast of Nagasaki. It happened that the inhabitants of that city had been expecting the arrival of one of the Dutch vessels from Batavia, and were delighted when a ship was signaled from the harbor entrance. When the mistake was discovered the city and surrounding country were thrown into great excitement. Troops were called out to repel the enemy, who disappeared after taking fresh water aboard. As a tragic result of the incident the Governor of Nagasaki and five military commanders who had quite upset the province during this false alarm, committed suicide in the most dignified manner as the only way of recovering their self-respect.

Again in 1811, the Russian sloop-of-war *Diana* lay off the Bay of Kunashiri to fill her water casks. Cannon shot from a neighboring fort and the hasty arrival of troops were followed by a series of protracted explanations between ship and shore, after which the commander and five of his crew were invited to a conference. First they were entertained with tea and saki and later made prisoners and led in chains to Hakodate. After some delay they were released and put on board the *Diana* to continue the cruise without apology of any kind from the Japanese.

The Salem ship-masters, under the Dutch flag, were fortunate enough to be welcomed when the French, Russian and English were driven from the coasts of Japan as foemen and barbarians. They were the first and last Americans to trade with the Japanese nation until after Perry had emphasized his friendly messages with the silent yet eloquent guns of the *Susquehanna*, *Mississippi*, *Saratoga* and *Plymouth*.

The *Margaret*, "than which a finer, better fitted or better manned ship never left the port of Salem," deserved to win from the seas whose distant reaches she furrowed, a kindlier fate than that which overtook her only eight years after her famous voyage to Japan. Her end was so rarely tragic that it looms large, even now, in the moving annals of notable shipwrecks. There exists a rare pamphlet, the title page of which, framed in a heavy border of black, reads as follows:

"Some Particulars of the Melancholy Shipwreck of the
*Margaret*, William Fairfield, Master, on her
Passage from Naples to Salem.
Having on board Forty-six Souls.
To which is Added a Short Occasional Sermon
and a Hymn
Printed for the Author 1810."

The little pamphlet, frayed and yellow, makes no pretence of literary treatment. It relates events with the bald brevity of a ship's log, as if the writer had perceived the futility of trying to picture scenes that were wholly beyond the power of words. The *Margaret* left Naples on the 10th of April, 1810, with a crew of fifteen, and thirty-one passengers. These latter were the captains, mates or seamen of American vessels which had been confiscated by Napoleon's orders in the harbors of the Mediterranean.

Aboard the *Margaret* were masters and men from Salem and Beverly, Boston and Baltimore, all of them prime American sailors of the old breed, shorn of all they possessed except their lives, which most of them were doomed to lose while homeward bound as passengers. "They passed the Gut of Gibralter the 22nd of April," says the pamphleteer, "—nothing of importance occurred until Sunday the 20th of May, when about meridian, in distress of weather, the ship was hove on her beam ends and totally disabled. Every person on board being on deck reached either the bottom or side of the ship and held on, the sea making a continual breach over her. During this time their boats were suffering much damage, being amongst the wreck of spars; they were with great difficulty enabled to obtain the long-boat, which by driving too the butts, and filling the largest holes with canvas, rendered it possible for them to keep her above water by continual bailing, still keeping her under the lee of the ship. It was now about 7 o'clock in the evening, the boat being hauled near the ship for the purpose of getting canvass, oakum, etc., to stop the leak, as many men as could reach the long boat jumped into her, and when finding the boat would again be sunk if they remained near the ship they were obliged to veer her to the leeward of the ship about 15 or 20 fathoms. They had not lain there long before one man from the ship jumped into the sea and swam for the boat, which he reached and was taken in. But finding at the same time that all were determined to pursue the same course they were obliged to veer the boat still further from the ship.

"They remained in this situation all night. The morning following was moderate and the sea tolerable smooth, at which time the people on the wreck were about half of them on the taff rail and the remainder on the bowsprit and windlass, every other part being under water. And they kept continually entreating to be let come into the boat. At this time casks of

brandy and other articles of the cargo were drifting among the spars, etc., from amongst which they picked up a mizzen top gallant sail, 2 spars, 5 oars, 1 cask of Oil, 1 (drowned) pig, 1 goat, 1 bag of bread, and they hove from the wreck a gallon keg of brandy. They then fixed a sail for the boat from the mizzen top gallant sail.

"It was now about eleven o'clock when the people on the wreck had secured 2 quadrants, 2 compasses, 1 hhd. of water, bread, flour and plenty of provisions, as they frequently informed those in the boat, but would not spare any to them unless they consented to come alongside the ship, which they refused to do fearing their anxiety for life would induce them to crowd in and again sink the boat. One of them jumped into the sea and made for the small boat which he reached, but finding they would not take him in, he returned to the wreck.

"At about meridian, finding they were determined to come from the wreck to the long boat, they cut the rope which held them to the wreck. The wind being to the southward and westward and moderate, they made their course as near as possible for the islands of Corvo or Flores, having two men continually employed in bailing the boat. In this situation they proceeded by the best of their judgment (having neither compass nor quadrant) for five days until they fell in with the brig *Poacher* of Boston, Captain Dunn from Alicant, who took them on board, treated them with every attention, and landed them in their native land on the 19th of June.

"When the long boat left the wreck there remained on board 31 souls. They immediately made preparations for their remaining days by securing on a stage they had erected for that purpose, all the necessaries of life they could obtain from the wreck. For the first week, they had a plenty of salt meat, pork, hams, flour, water, etc. They also caught a turtle and having found a tinder box in a chest they kindled a fire in the ship's

bell and cooked it, making a soup which afforded them a warm dinner, and the only one they were able to cook.

"They remained under the direction of Captain Larcom, whom they had appointed to act as their head, until Sunday, the 27th of May (seven days), when the upper deck came off by the violence of the sea. At this time they lost both the provisions and the water they had secured on the stage. In this distressing situation, Captain Larcom and four others took the yawl, shattered as she was. The other twenty-six went forward on the bowsprit with two gallons of wine and a little salt meat, where another stage was erected on the bows. At this time the water being only knee-deep on the lower deck they were enabled to obtain hams, etc., from below but which for want of water were of little service. And the wine before mentioned was their only drink for seven days.

"They procured a cask of brandy from the lower hold, of which they drank so freely (being parched with thirst) that fourteen of them died the succeeding night. They made one attempt to intercept a sail (four having passed) from which the boat returned unsuccessful. Captain Larcom with four others took the boat, there being only three others in a situation to leave the wreck, and the others preferring to remain on it rather than venture in the boat. They (Captain L. and 4 others) left the wreck, by observation 39°, 12′, and steering N. W. when after twenty-three days had elapsed, and two of them having died, the boat was picked up by Captain S. L. Davis from Lisbon for Gloucester, where they arrived on the 18th of July."

In this abrupt manner the story ends, and perhaps it is just as well. Those left alive and clinging to the submerged wreck numbered ten, and there they perished without voice or sign to tell how long they struggled and hoped against the inevitable end. The three survivors who escaped in the yawl lived for twenty-three days almost without food or water. When they

landed they told how "previous to their departure from the *Margaret* they went under the bowsprit and joined in prayer for deliverance with Captain Janvin of Newburyport. This gentleman who remained behind had conducted a similar service daily for his companions since their shipwreck, and many of them united in his petitions quite seriously. Then the five men in the yawl took a solemn leave of the ten survivors, of whom no farther tidings has ever reached us. With two and a half gallons of brandy and a little port, the adventurers in so small a boat for sixteen days pursued their anxious and afflictive course. Then they caught rain in their handkershifs and by wringing them out succeeded in partially allaying their thirst. Later they caught some rudder fish and eat them."

There are old men living in Salem who can recall John Very, second mate of the brig *Romp*, who was one of the three that lived to be picked up in the yawl. When the boys used to ask him to spin the yarn of the wreck of the *Margaret* he would shake his head and become morose and sad. These were memories that he wished to forget, and it is pleasanter even to a later generation to recall the *Margaret*, the fine ship newly launched, with her crew of stalwart young men "in the bloom of youth," bravely setting sail on her maiden voyage to find the way to mysterious Japan in the faraway year of Eighteen Hundred and One.

# CHAPTER XII

## THE FIRST YANKEE SHIP AT GUAM

## (1801)

THAT minute dot on the map of the Pacific known as Guam has appealed to the American people with a certain serio-comic interest as a colonial possession accidentally acquired and ruled by one exiled naval officer after another in the rôle of a benevolent despot and monarch of all he surveys. This most fertile and populous of the Ladrone Islands, which are spattered over a waste of blue water for four hundred miles and more, was casually picked up as the spoils of war, it will be remembered, by the cruiser *Charleston* soon after hostilities with Spain had been declared in 1898. The Spanish Governor of Guam was rudely awakened from his siesta by the boom of guns seaward and, with the politeness of his race, hastened to send out word to the commander of the American cruiser that he was unable to return the salute for lack of powder. Thereupon he was informed that he was not being saluted but captured, and the Stars and Stripes were run above the ancient fort and its moldering cannon which had barked salvos of welcome to the stately galleons of Spain bound from South America to Manila two centuries before.

The sovereignty of Castile being eliminated in this hilarious and harmless fashion, the hard headed legatees who wore the blue of the American navy sought to reform what had been a tropical paradise, where no man worked unless he wanted to, where simple, brown-skinned folk dwelt in drowsy contentment without thought of the morrow. The gospel taught by the late

Captain Richard Leary as naval governor of Guam aimed to make these happy islanders more industrious and more moral according to the code of the United States. His successors have labored along similar lines and Captain Dorn, governor of Guam in the year of 1908, proclaimed such commendable but rigorous doctrine as this:

"Every resident of the island having no apparent means of subsistence who has the physical ability to apply himself or herself to some lawful calling; every person found loitering about saloons, dram shops or gambling houses, or tramping or straying through the country without visible means of support; every person known to be a pickpocket, thief or burglar, when found loitering about any gambling house, cockpit or any outlying barrio, and every idle or dissolute person of either sex caught occupying premises without the consent of the owner thereof, shall on conviction be punished by a fine of $250, or imprisonment for one year or both."

A brighter picture of the life of these islanders was painted several years ago by W. E. Safford, who wrote of them in a paper contributed to the *American Anthropologist:*

"Everybody seemed contented and had a pleasant greeting for the stranger. It seemed to me that I had discovered Arcadia, and when I thought of a letter I had received from a friend asking whether I believed it would be possible to civilize the natives, I felt like exclaiming: 'God forbid.'"

The same visitor relates of these people and their ways:

"There are few masters and few servants in Guam. As a rule, the farm is not too extensive to be cultivated by the family, all of whom, even to the little children, lend a hand. Often the owners of neighboring farms work together in communal fashion, one day on A's corn, the next on B's, and so on, laughing, skylarking, and singing at their work and stopping whenever they feel like it to take a drink of tuba from a neighboring

cocoanut tree. Each does his share without constraint, nor will one indulge so fully in tuba as to incapacitate himself for work, for experience has taught the necessity of temperance, and every one must do his share of the reciprocal services. By the time the young men have finished their round the weeds are quite high enough once more in A's corn to require attention. In the evening they separate, each going to his own ranch to feed his bullock, pigs and chickens; and after a good supper they lie down on a Pandanus mat spread over the elastic platform of split bamboo."

A pleasant picture, this, of toil lightened by common interest; an idyllic glimpse of what work ought to be, perhaps worthy the attention of socialists, labor unions, and those that scorn the heathen in his blindness.

Almost a hundred years before Guam became a United States possession, the island was visited by a Salem bark, the *Lydia*, the first vessel that ever flew the American flag in the harbor of this island. There has been preserved in manuscript an illustrated journal of the first mate of the *Lydia*, William Haswell, in which he wrote at considerable length the story of this historical pioneering voyage, and his impressions of the island and its people under Spanish rule in the far-away year of 1801. As the earliest description of a visit to Guam by an American sailor or traveler, the manuscript has gained a timely interest by the transfer of the island from under the Spanish flag.

However arduous may be the restrictions imposed by the conscientious naval governors of to-day, the journal of First Mate Haswell of the *Lydia* shows that the islanders were released from a condition of slavery and merciless exploitation by the memorable arrival of the cruiser *Charleston* and the subsequent departure from the stone palace of the last of the Dons of Spain.

The very earliest experience of these islanders with Christian civilization must have inspired unhappy tradition to make them far from fond of their rulers. The Marianne or Ladrone Islands were discovered by Magellan on March 6, 1521, after a passage of three months and twenty days from the strait which bears his name. Among the accounts written of this voyage is that of Antonio Pigafetta, of Vicenza, which relates the terrible sufferings endured across an unexplored ocean. After there was no more food the crews were forced to eat rats, which brought a price of half a crown each, "and enough of them could not be got." The seamen then ate sawdust, and the ox hide used as chafing gear on the rigging of the main-yards. The water was yellow and stinking. Scurvy devastated the expedition, and nineteen men died of it, while twenty-five or thirty more fell ill "of divers sicknesses, both in the arms and legs and other places in such manner that very few remained healthy."

In this desperate plight, Magellan sighted two islands on which there were no natives nor any food, and passed by them to find an anchorage off what was later called Guam. The natives came out to welcome the ship, skimming over the water in wonderful canoes or proas, and brought gifts of fruit. The ships' sails were furled and preparations made to land when a skiff which had ridden astern of the flagship was missed. It may have broken adrift, but the natives were suspected of stealing it, and Captain-General Magellan at once led forty armed men ashore, burned forty or fifty houses and many boats, and slaughtered seven or eight native men and women.

"Before we went ashore," writes Pigafetta, "some of our people who were sick said to us that if we should kill any of them whether man or woman, that we should bring on board their entrails, being persuaded that with the latter they could be cured. When we wounded some of those islanders with

arrows which entered their bodies, they tried to draw forth the arrow, now in one way, now in another, in the meantime regarding it with great astonishment, and they died of it, which did not fail to cause us compassion. Seeing us taking our departure, then, they followed us with more than a hundred boats for more than a league. They approached our ships, showing us fish and pretending to wish to give them to us; but when they were near they cast stones at us and fled. We passed under full sail among their boats, which, with great dexterity, escaped us. We saw among them some women who were weeping and tearing their hair, surely for their husbands killed by us."

After this bloodthirsty and wicked visitation no attempt was made to colonize these islands until a Jesuit priest, Padre Diege Luis de Suavitores, landed at Guam in 1668, when a mission was established. The Spanish Jesuits held full sway until they were expelled in 1769 and their place taken by the Friars.

When the Salem bark, *Lydia*, visited Guam, therefore, in 1801, the Spanish administration was in its heyday and had been long enough established to offer a fair survey of what this particular kind of civilization had done for the natives. The *Lydia* was in Manila on a trading voyage when she was chartered by the Spanish Government to carry to Guam the new governor of the islands, his family, his suite and his luggage. The bark sailed from Manila for Guam on October 20, 1801, and two days later, while among the Philippine Islands, the first mate wrote in his journal:

"Now having to pass through dangerous straits, we went to work to make boarding nettings, and to get our arms in the best order, but had we been attacked, we should have been taken with ease. The pirates are numerous in their prows* and we

*Proas.

From a photograph by E. G. Merrill

Salem Harbor as it is to-day

have but eleven in number exclusive of our passengers, *viz.*, the captain, two officers, cook, steward, and six men before the mast. The passengers are the Governor of the Marianna Islands, his Lady, three children and two servant girls, and twelve men servants, a Friar and his servant, a Judge and two servants, total passengers twenty-four and we expected but eight. Too many idlers to drink water, and to my certain knowledge they would not have fought had we been attacked. However, we passed in safety.

"These passengers caused a great deal of trouble when their baggage came on board. It could not be told from the cargo and, of course, we stowed it all away together below, so that every day there was a search for something or other which caused the ship to be forever in confusion."

There was more excitement while passing between the islands of Panay and Negros, where the bark was becalmed close to land, "and all our passengers were in the greatest confusion for fear of being taken and put to death in the dark and not have time to say their prayers." Next day the *Lydia* anchored at the island of Sambongue and the "Governor, his Lady and children" went on shore to visit the officers of the Spanish settlement. Captain Barnard of the bark did not like the appearance of this port, and "put the ship into the highest state of defence possible, got all the boarding nettings up, and the arms loaded and kept a sea watch. This night a Spanish launch, as it proved to be afterwards, attempted to come on board, but we fired at it and ordered it to keep off."

Cordial relations were soon established between ship and shore, however, and the Spanish Governor of Sambongue and his sons went on board to make a friendly call. "We had made every preparation in our power to receive them with the greatest respect," says the journal. "His sons were as bad as Indians. They wanted everything they saw. Captain Barnard

presented them with a day and night glass. They in turn sent a boat-load of cocoanuts, upwards of a thousand, and some plantain stalks for the live stock, some small hogs, two sheep, a small ox and goat, but the live stock was for the passengers. The same evening the Governor's sons returned on board and brought with them six girls and their music to entertain us, but the ship was so full of lumber that they had no place to show their dancing. However, we made shift to amuse ourselves till three in the morning. The current then turning and a light breeze from the northward springing up, we sent them all on shore, they singing and playing their music on the way."

The following day, November 7th, saw the *Lydia* under way and William Haswell, with cheerful recollections of this island, found time to write:

"The town of Sambongue is a pleasant place and protected by fifty pieces of cannon, the greatest part of them so concealed by the trees that they cannot be seen by shipping. This proved fatal to two English frigates that attempted to take it. They landed their men before the Spaniards fired. The Spaniards destroyed two boats and killed, by their account, forty men, one of them a Captain of Marines. The English made the best of their way back to the ships. One of them got aground abreast of the Fort and received great injury. This is their story, but we must make allowance. One thing is certain, the British left the greater part of their arms behind them. The English account is, the *Fox*, four killed and twelve wounded, the *Sybille*, two killed and six wounded.

"The English have so much of the Malay trade that but little comes to the share of the Spaniards, and in the words of the Governor's wife there is plenty of cocoanuts, water and girls at Sambongue, but nothing else. I was well pleased with the inhabitants, as they did everything in their power to serve us.

"November 8th. We had fine weather, light winds and

those easterly, so that it rendered our passage long and tedious. Our passengers were very anxious to arrive at the island where they were to be the head commanders, a station they had never before enjoyed. The Friar was praying day and night but it would not bring a fair wind.

". . . Jan. 4th. 4 P. M. we set all steering sails and stood to the westward and got sight of the Islands of Guam and Rota. Next day we had light winds and calms. We steered for the north end of the island and at five P. M. found it was too late to get in that night. Reeft the topsails and stood off and on all night. At 4 P. M. set all sail to get round to the S. W. side. At 10 A. M. saw the town of Aguana* and at one we entered the harbour at Caldera. A gun was fired from the Island Fort, at which we came to and handed sails, the ship rolling very heavy. A small boat came on board to enquire who we were. As soon as they were informed that the new Governor was on board, they set off in the greatest hurry to carry the information to Don Manuel Mooro, the old Governor.

"The breeze continuing, we got under weigh and beat up the harbour. They placed canoes on the dangerous places and by 6 P. M. the ship was up and anchored in sixteen fathoms of water, sails handed, boats and decks cleaned. At midnight the Adjutant came on board with a letter from Don Manuel wishing our passenger, Don Vincentz Blanco, joy on his safe arrival and informing him that the boats would attend him in the morning.

"Jan. 7th. Accordingly at 6 A. M. three boats came on board, one of them a handsome barge, the crew in uniform, a large launch for baggage, and a small boat for the Judge and his two servants. At ten the Governor, his Lady, and suite left the Ship. We saluted with nine guns and three cheers. We then went to work to clear ship."

*The name of the capital or chief town of Guam is spelled "Agana" to-day.

At this place in his narrative the first mate of the *Lydia* turns aside from the pomp and fine feathers of the new Governor's reception to tell of the hard fate of another vessel.

"We saw a ship heaving in sight and not able to find the passage over the Reef. I took a small boat and went out and found her to be an English ship in distress. I piloted them in and brought them to anchorage near the Hill Forts in thirty fathoms of water. Their story is as follows, that the ship was taken from the Spaniards on the coast of Peru and carried to Port Jackson, New Holland, and condemned. The present owners bought her there and went with her to New Zealand to cut spars which they were intending to carry to the Cape of Good Hope. But the ship going on shore and bilging herself, delayed them some time which occasioned a greater expenditure of provisions than what they expected.

"They at length got the ship repaired and loaded and went to the Friendly Islands to get provisions, but they were disappointed as the natives were at war with one another and nothing to be got but yams of which they got a slender stock. They set off again, but the ship got aground on some rocks which made her leaky. They got her off and stopt the leak on the inside with clay as well as they could. Their men then mutinied and insisted on carrying the ship to Macao, but not being able to reach that place, they put in here for provisions, thinking the Spaniards would let them go out again. But their ship was so bad that she never left this place. They could not get at the leak any other way than by heaving the keel out and that was a work of time. I sent them some salt beef and pork on board and took an officer and fifty Indians and a bower anchor and cable with me to get her up the harbour which we were some time about, but plenty of men made light work, and I warped her up abreast of the *Lydia*, and there moored her.

"Next day eight of the English ship's men took a boat and went to town to the Governor to enquire how much he would give them to carry the ship to Manila, but he ordered them to be put in irons for mutiny."

Meanwhile the *Lydia* was discharging cargo and filling her water casks. When the wind blew too hard for the boats to make a landing at Agana, Mate Haswell writes: "I used to take my gun and two or three Indians with me and wander into the woods, but in all my stay on the Island I shot only one small deer and some hogs and a few birds amongst which was a large Bat near three feet from tip of wing to wing. The woods are so full of underbrush that it is hard labour to one that is not used to it to get forward, but the Indians travel as fast as I can on clear ground. I frequently went into inland Indian villages and always found them hard at work with the tobacco which all belongs to the King. As soon as dried it must be carried to the Governor and he sells it all at an enormous price. Everything else they have, even the cattle, belongs to the King.

"The houses are small, but very cleanly, and are built of a kind of basket work, with cocoanut leaves and are about twelve feet from the ground. Their furniture consists of two or three hammocks of net work, and the same number of mats, a chest, one frying pan, a large copper pan, and a few earthen jars. Near their houses is a large row of wicker baskets in piles six feet high for their fowls to lay their eggs and set in, the breed of which they are very careful to preserve. The fire place is under a small shed near the house to shelter it from the rain. Their food is chiefly shell fish and plantains, cocoanuts and a kind of small potatoes which they dry and make flour of, and it makes good bread when new.

"But to return to the *Lydia*. She was bountifully supplied with fresh provisions, beef, pork, fowls, all at the King's expense

and in the greatest plenty so that we gave three-quarters of it away to the English ship, who had nothing allowed them but jerked beef and rice. As our crew was small we had a great deal of duty a-going on, I often got assistance from the English ship and with this supply of men the work was light. I kept the long boat constantly employed bringing on board wood and water. Four men were on shore cutting wood, and some hands repairing the rigging, painting ship, etc., and getting ready for sea as soon as possible.

"About this time Captain Barnard came on board and went, accompanied by himself and the second officer, to make a survey of the hull of the English ship, her hull, rigging, sails, etc., and found her not fit to perform a passage without some new sails, a new cable and a great deal of new rigging and a new boat, as hers were lost. The leak we thought could be reduced on the inside, but all the seams were very open and required caulking. A report of our opinions being drawn out, I was sent to town with it.

"The Governor hinted it was impossible to get what was required, but yet wished to send the ship to Manila. The poor owners hung their heads in expectancy of the condemnation of the ship."

After the *Lydia* had been made ready for her return voyage to Manila, Mr. Haswell relates that he went to town, Agana, for a few days, and passed "the time in a very pleasant manner. I found them preparing our sea stock, which was to be in the greatest abundance. It consisted of eight oxen, fifty hogs, large and small, but in general about thirty pounds each, twenty-four dozen of fowl, five dozen of pigeons, two live deer and a boat load of yams, potatoes, watermelons, oranges, limes, cocoanuts, etc. The way we came to be so well provided for was that both the Governors and the Lieutenant Governor insisted on supplying us with stock, but that was not all, for the Friars

and the Captains of the Villages near the seaside all sent presents on board, some one thing, some another.

"Thus the ship's decks were as full as they could be with live stock, hen coops from one end of the quarterdeck to the other, the long boat and main deck full of hogs, and the forecastle of oxen. This great stock of provisions was more than half wasted, for the heat of the weather was such that more than half of it was spoiled. It would not keep more than twenty-four hours without being cooked and then not more than two days, so that if we killed an ox of five hundred pounds, four hundred of it was hove overboard, which was a pity, but we had no salt.

"All of the English gentlemen and some of the Spanish officers came down to the waterside to see us embark. I then went in company with Captain Barnard and bid the kind Governor farewell and found scarcely a dry eye in the house. The Governor's Lady would not make her appearance, but she waved a handkerchief from the balcony of the Palace as we embarked in the boats.

"Captain Barnard was disappointed as he expected to have carried the old Governor back to Manila with us, and only required half the sum we had for going out, which was 8,000 dollars, but the old man thought 4,000 dollars was too much and offered 2,000 which was refused, the Captain thinking that he would give it at last. Don Manuel had the precaution to embark all the old Governor's goods and the remains of his wife on board the *Lydia* by which Captain Barnard thought he would come up to his price, and so took them on board for the small sum of two hundred dollars. Nothing was left behind but the old Governor and servants. He expected to the last moment that we would stop for him, but as soon as he saw us under weigh, he wanted to stop us, but it was too late as we were gone before his messenger reached the fort.

"We left the Harbour de Calderon with a fine breeze N. E. and as soon as we were at sea a man belonging to the English ship that had secreted himself on board, came on deck and shewed himself. We had also an Otaheita Indian that was under the care of Captain Barnard as his servant. We had but one passenger, a Friar, and he was a good man, his behaviour was very different from the one we carried out with us. He was so bad that we were forced to send him to Coventry, or in other words, no one would speak with him."

Having finished this running chronicle of the voyage to Guam, the first mate of the *Lydia* made a separate compilation of such general information as he had been able to pick up. His account of the treatment of the natives by their Spanish overlords is in part as follows:

"They are under the Spanish martial law. All (native) officers are tried by the Governor and the King's officers of the army. They have the power to inflict any punishment they think proper. When a man is found worthy of death he must be sent to Manila to be condemned and then brought back again to be executed. There was only one lying in irons for murder, but Captain Barnard would not take him with us. The whole island belongs to the King of Spain whom the Governor personates, and the inhabitants must pay a yearly rent for their houses and lands and all the cattle are the property of the Crown and can be taken from them at the pleasure of the King's officers, nor dare they kill their cattle but with the permission of the Governor or the Friars, and then never kill a cow till she is very old. The only things they have are the milk and butter and the labour of the beast, and a small piece when it is killed.

"They are called free-men, but I think contrary. If the Governor wants a road cut he calls on all the men and sets them about it and only finds them rice till it is done. The old Governor carried too far and was called a great Tyrant. He

made them build two forts and a bridge and cut a road through a high rock, build a school house and some other things and never allowed them to be idle, but for want of a supply of food from Manila the poor men were near starving as he did not give them time to cultivate the land.

"The Church also has its modes of trial. They have a kind of Inquisition or trial by Torture established but I never heard of their punishing any person. The poor Indians respect the Friars highly, but the Governor will not let the Friars meddle with the affairs of Government, as they often want to do. They were at variance about a man that had committed murder and fled to the Church for protection. One of the Officers took him from under the altar. The priests resented this but were forced to hold their tongues. They sat on trials before, but now they are excluded and the Governor takes care of things temporal. But we carried out a Judge with us to examine into the Governor's behaviour and to hear the complaints of the poor to see them redressed.

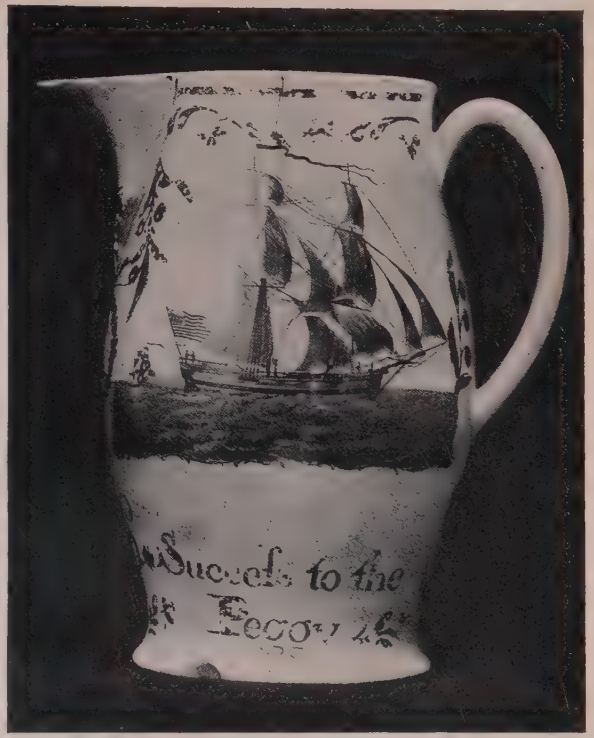
"On the arrival of the new Governor the ship that brings him salutes him when he leaves the ship and on his landing all the forts fire except the Citadel which fires on his entering the church. The road was lined with the militia without arms and he was received at the landing place by the Lieutenant Governor and Adjutant and the Guards under arms. There was a handsome carriage and four horses for the children and two chair palanquins for him and his Lady, but he mounted the Adjutant's horse, and rode under triumphal arches of flowers and leaves of trees to the church which he entered with all his family. The forts then fired and the Guards received him on his leaving the church and conducted him to the Palace where the old Governor received him and the Guards fired three volleys.

"A grand entertainment was provided of which all the officers

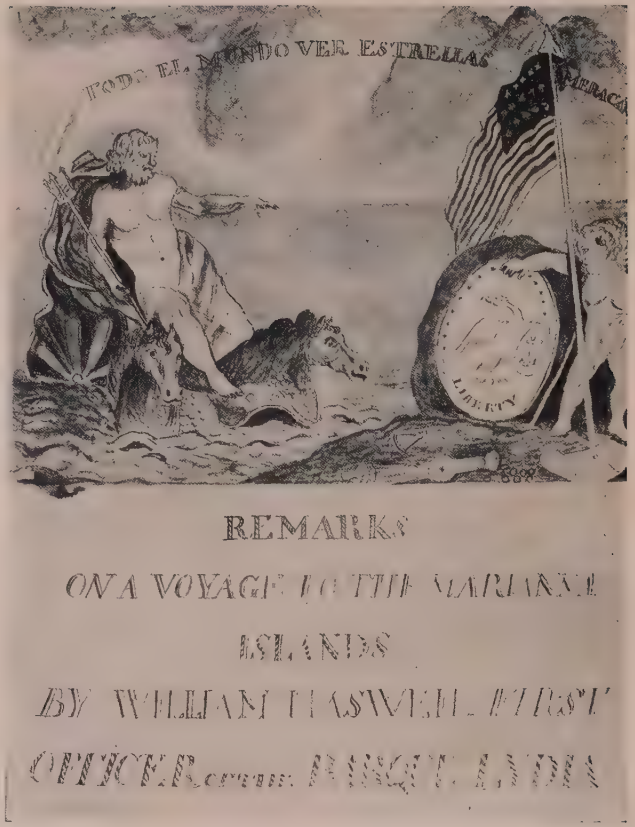
partook and in which the old Governor shewed his taste. His table was covered with the best of provisions, consisting of beef, venison, fowls, fish, turtle, etc. All was in the greatest style, and the old man still had good wines and chocolate though he had been five years without supplies from Manila. The feast he gave was grand and by far surpassing what was to be expected on a barren island. The next day all the officers waited on the Governor's Lady to pay their respects. All of them brought presents, *viz.*, butter, eggs, fowls, fruit, but the Adjutant's wife gave her a pair of ear-rings of pearls, the largest that I ever saw. They were entertained with music and dancing and had beverages served round to them, but some of the head ones had chocolate, wine, cakes, etc.

"In their dances the natives imitate the Spaniards as near as possible. Their voices are soft and harmonious, their songs are short and agreeable, their language borders on the Malay but not so that they can understand one another. These people are very hospitable and on your entering their huts they offer you young cocoanuts and will get any kind of fruit they have in a few moments. They are in general healthy and strong but a certain malady introduced among them by the Spaniards has made sad ravages and they had no medicines in the Island at the time of our arrival, and they have no person that is acquainted with medicines or with disorders of any kind. It is a great pity that the Spanish Government does not send a man sufficiently qualified to put a stop to that dreadful disorder.

"The Roman Catholic religion is universally established in all its Terrors. I could not find out whether the Indians had any of their own, but they pay great respect to some large flat stones of an oval shape that are often found near their villages and are engraved with characters like Malay, but there was no person on the Island that could decipher them, as all kinds of learning have been long lost by the poor Indians. The Spaniards




The old-time sailors used to have their vessels painted on pitchers and punch bowls. (The legend beneath this gallant brig is "Success to the Peggy")




Title page from the journal of the *Lydia*, bound to Guam in 1801

have established a school to teach them to read and write, but there are few of them who learn more than to read the Prayers which are given them by the Friars.

"In the inland places the men and women go naked, but they have clothes and on the appearance of a European they run and put them on and are proud of being dressed, but they cannot buy clothes to wear in common because they are so dear, for the Governor gains eight hundred per cent. on all he sells them. And no other person is allowed to trade. They are very obedient to government and it is seldom that there is any disturbance.

"Of the troops one company is of colored men formerly brought from Manila but now more than half Indians. They are well clothed and make a good appearance with bright arms and a good band of music. Of militia there is one regiment of one thousand men. Their arms are in bad order, so rusty that when the Militia paraded to receive the new Governor they were not armed but sat about cleaning them. The payment of this militia is the only cash in circulation on the Island. Every man has ten dollars a year to keep himself in readiness. When pay day comes it causes a kind of market. The Governor's secretary pays them and they carry the money to the dry goods store and lay it out in Bengal goods, cottons, and in Chinese pans, pots, knives, and hoes, which soon takes all their pay away so that the cash never leaves the Governor's hands. It is left here by the galleons in passing and when the Governor is relieved he carries it with him to Manila, often to the amount of eighty or ninety thousand dollars.

"The population is estimated at 11,000 inhabitants* of which twelve only are white and about fifty or sixty mixed. The Governor and four Friars are the only Spaniards from old Spain, the others are from Peru, Manila, etc. The city or

* The first American census of Guam reported a native population of between 9,000 and 10,000.

capital of the Island is on the north side in a large bay, but there is no anchorage for shipping. It is a pleasant town and contains five hundred houses of all sorts and one thousand inhabitants of all descriptions. It is on a small plain under a hill which protects it from the heavy gales that sometimes blow from the eastward. The town consists of six streets, one of them three-quarters of a mile long. The buildings of the Governor and Chief Officers are of stone and are good houses. The Palace is two-story and situated in a very pleasant part of the town with a large plantation of bread-fruit trees before it, and a road from it to the landing place. It is in the old Spanish style. The audience chamber is near a hundred feet long, forty broad and twenty high and well ornamented with lamps and paintings. At each end of it are private apartments. In the front is a large balcony which reaches from one end of the house to the other. Behind the palace are all the outhouses which are very numerous. Close to the Palace are the barracks and guard-room. It is a large building and is capable of containing five hundred men with ease. To the northward stands the church, built like one of our barns at home. It has a low steeple for the bells. On the inside it is well adorned with pictures, images, etc. On the south east and near the church is the free school which has a spire. Here the alarm bell is hung, also the school bell. The scholars never leave the house but to go to church."

In this rambling fashion does Mr. William Haswell, mate of the Salem bark *Lydia*, discourse of Guam as he saw it in the year of Our Lord, 1801. He dwells at some length also on the remarkable abundance of fish, shells and *beche de mer*, the animals wild and tame, "the finest watermelons I ever saw," and the proas or "Prows" which he has seen "sail twelve knots with ease." Of one of these craft he tells this tale:

"There is a Prow that was drove on shore in a southerly

gale from the Caroline Islands with only one man alive. She had been at sea fourteen days, and ten of them without provisions. There were three dead in the boat and the one that was alive could not get out of the boat without assistance. She had but one out-rigger which they shifted from side to side. In other ways she was like the Guam Prows. The man that came in her was well used and has no desire to go back. He looks a little like a Malay, but there was no person in the Island that understood his language."

Mate William Haswell has left unfinished certain incidents of his voyage to the bewitching island of Guam. Why was the Friar of the outward voyage sent to Coventry? Did the thrifty "old Governor" finally overtake the remains of his wife which sailed away to Manila without him? One might also wish to know more of the brilliantly successful methods of the Governor as a captain of industry. The system by which he kept all the cash in the island in his own pockets, paying his militia in order that they might immediately buy goods of him at a profit of eight hundred per cent., seems flawless. It has not been surpassed by any twentieth century apostle of "high finance."

Whatever sins of omission may be charged against the literary account of First Mate William Haswell, it is greatly to his credit that he should have taken pains to write this journal of the *Lydia*, a memorial of the earliest voyage under the American flag to that happy-go-lucky colony of Uncle Sam which in more recent years has added something to the gaiety of nations.

# CHAPTER XIII

## NATHANIEL BOWDITCH AND HIS "PRACTICAL NAVIGATOR"

(1802)

HAIL to thee, poor little ship, *Mayflower*, of Delft Haven," wrote Thomas Carlyle, "poor common looking ship, hired by common charter-party for coined dollars—caulked with mere oakum and tar—provisioned with vulgarest biscuit and bacon—yet what ship Argo or miraculous epic ship, built by the sea gods, was other than a foolish bumbarge in comparison!"

This fine rhapsody is of a piece with many another tribute to the memory of the Pilgrim Fathers and their immortal ship, and yet it would seem that some measure of praise were due that sturdy English seaman, Thomas Jones, the master of the *Mayflower*, who dared to make his blundering way across the Atlantic three centuries ago. Nor can one go wrong in admiring the courage and resourcefulness of any of these bold seamen who crossed oceans, made their landfalls and destined ports in safety and rolled home again with the crudest knowledge of navigation and almost no instruments for accurately charting their courses. Even a century ago shipmasters voyaged to far-away havens without chronometers, trusting to the log-line and compass to find their longitude by dead reckoning, and keeping track of their latitude with the quadrant and a "Navigator" or "Seaman's Friend." Nathaniel Silsbee of Salem records that as late as 1827 he made a passage in a brig to Rotterdam when they had no chronometer, and knew nothing

of lunar observations, but navigated by dead reckoning, or the estimated speed of the ship. On his first voyage of eighteen months beyond the Cape of Good Hope, "the only spare canvass for the repair of a sail on board the vessel was what was on the cover of the log-book."*

Before informing the landsman who Nathaniel Bowditch was, and what this self-taught astronomer and mathematician of Salem did to aid the great multitudes of those that go down to the sea in ships, it may be worth while to tell something of how our forefathers found their way from shore to shore. The real beginnings of the science of navigation as it is known to-day, are to be sought no further away than the seventeenth century which first saw in use the telescope, the pendulum, logarithms, the principles of the law of gravitation and instruments for measuring minute angles of the heavens. The master of the *Mayflower* in 1620 was hardly better equipped for ocean path-finding than Columbus had been two centuries before him. Columbus in his turn had made his voyages possible by employing the knowledge gained by the earlier Portuguese exploring expeditions of the fifteenth century.

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* The Boston ship *Massachusetts* sailed for the East Indies in 1790. She was the largest merchant vessel built in the United States up to that time, and was especially designed and equipped for the Oriental trade, measuring six hundred tons and carrying a crew of eighty men. Winthrop L. Marvin's American Merchant Marine states:

"In view of the importance of the *Massachusetts* it is astonishing to learn from Delano's Narrative that she went to sea without a chronometer, and without a single officer who could work a lunar observation. This compelled her to creep down the coast of Africa, feeling her way along, as it were, by the discolored current. She tried to sight the Cape Verde Islands to correct her reckoning, but missed them, and standing too far back toward the East came near bringing up on the inhospitable sands of South Africa. But the worst miscalculation of all was the missing of Java Head, that great landmark of East India voyagers. This blunder compelled the *Massachusetts* to make at least fifteen extra degrees of 'easting' and cost her about three weeks' time. If a great ship like the *Massachusetts* were so ill-provided with the instruments of navigation, it is inexplicable how the small ships of poorer owners ever found their way around the Cape of Good Hope, and through the labyrinths of the East Indian Archipelago."

In fact, up to the time of the voyages undertaken under the patronage of Prince Henry of Portugal which led to the discovery of the Cape Verde Islands in 1447, and of Sierra Leone in 1460, thousands of years had passed without the slightest improvement in aids to navigation except the introduction of the mariners' compass or magnetic needle among European nations at the beginning of the fourteenth century. The civilization which bordered the Mediterranean had known only coastwise traffic, and the vast ocean beyond the Pillars of Hercules was mysterious and unfurrowed by the keels of trading galleys. Ancient discoveries in astronomy had taught that the altitudes of the sun and stars varied with respect to the location of the observer according to fixed laws, but the sailor had not dreamed of making use of these laws to find his latitude or longitude, except for the tradition that the adventurous Phoenician traders guided their vessels by means of the known position of the constellation of Ursa Minor, or of the Pole star.

Prince Henry of Portugal resolved to collect and systematize all the knowledge of nautical affairs obtainable in the early part of the fifteenth century, preparatory to sending forth his intrepid seamen as explorers of the Atlantic, and established an observatory near Cape St. Vincent in order to obtain more accurate tables of the declination of the sun, by which the mariner obtained his latitude in clumsy and unreliable fashion. The sun's "declination" is its angular distance from the celestial equator, or the angle that a line drawn to the sun from any point at sea or on the earth's surface makes with the plane of the celestial equator. In other words, the most important early discovery in navigation, next to the use of the magnetic needle, was the use of an instrument by which these angles could be determined and then utilized by means of astronomical tables to find a ship's distance north or south of the earth's equator, in degrees and fractions thereof.

John II of Portugal, grand-nephew of this enlightened and ambitious Prince Henry, endeavored to make further advancement in the same field and employed a "Committee on Navigation" to collect new data and make more calculations to lessen the errors in the tables of the sun's declination. They turned their attention also to the instrument then in use for taking observations at sea, the cross-staff, and recommended that the astrolabe should be employed instead. The shipmaster of Columbus' time went to sea with a cross-staff or astrolabe, a compass, a table of the sun's declination, a table for connecting the altitude of the pole star and occasionally a very incorrect chart. The first sea chart ever seen in England was carried there in 1489 by Bartholomew Columbus. The log-line had not been invented and it was not until 1607 that any means was known of measuring a ship's course through the water.

The cross-staff, as used by Columbus and Vasco da Gamma, consisted of two light battens or strips of wood, joined in the shape of a cross, the observer taking his sights from the ends of the "cross" and the "staff," on which the angles were marked in degrees. As a device for measuring altitudes, the cross-staff had been known to ancient astronomers, although unknown to their seamen. The astrolabe was a copper disk, suspended from above with a plumb line beneath, and was found to be more convenient for taking altitudes than the cross-staff, and gradually superseded it.

The problem of finding longitudes at sea was far more baffling than that of latitude. It was early discovered that the only accurate and satisfactory method must be by ascertaining the difference in time at two meridians at the same instant, but until the invention of the chronometer this could be done only by finding, at two different places, the apparent time of the same celestial phenomena. The most obvious phenomena occurring to the early navigators were the motions of the moon

among the fixed stars, which was first suggested in 1514. Better instruments and a sounder theory of the moon's course were needed before its motions could be predicted with accuracy and recorded beforehand in an almanac in order to give the mariner a basis of comparison with his own observations, and the very principal of such a theory was, of course, unknown until Newton's great discoveries, after which the problem of lunar observations began to have a chief place in the history of navigation.

The cross-staff and astrolabe gave place in time to the quadrant, which was a much more accurate instrument for observation and was used by the mariners of the eighteenth century. It, in its turn, was discarded for the sextant during the nineteenth century, which instrument, as improved and perfected, is in universal use at sea to-day for helping to find a ship's position by means of the measurement of angles with respect to the sun and stars.

The chronometer, for finding longitudes, has taken the place of lunar observations, and the story of the struggle to invent a time-keeping mechanism of requisite accuracy for use at sea is one of the romances of science. Watches were unknown until 1530, but before the end of that century efforts had been made to ascertain the difference in time between two places by means of two of these crude timepieces which, however, were too unreliable to be of any practical service to navigation. The study of the problem was stimulated by the offer of a reward of a thousand crowns by Philip III of Spain, in 1598, to him who should discover a safer and more accurate method of finding longitude at sea than those in use. The States-General of Holland followed this with the offer of ten thousand florins, and in 1674 England became actively interested in the problem and Greenwich Observatory was established for the benefit of navigation and especially to calculate the moon's exact position

with respect to the fixed stars a year in advance and so make the "lunar observation" method of determining longitude a safer guide for the seamen than was the case with the tables then existing.

The pressing need of such investigation was brought home to England by a series of great disasters to her naval force because of blundering navigation. Several men-of-war were wrecked off Plymouth in 1691 through a mistake in their landfall and Sir Cloudesley Shovel, one of Great Britain's immortal admirals, was lost with his fleet of ships off the Scilly Islands in 1707 because of a mistake in reckoning position. The government became convinced that the whole theory and practice of navigation needed a radical overhauling, and in 1714 a "royal commission for the discovery of longitude at sea" was appointed and at the same time a series of splendid prizes was offered for the invention of an accurate chronometer; five thousand pounds for a chronometer that would enable a ship six months from home to find her longitude within sixty miles; seven thousand five hundred pounds if the limit of error were within forty miles; ten thousand pounds if the position were correct within thirty miles. Another clause of this bill as enacted by Parliament offered a "premium" of twenty thousand pounds for the invention of any method whatever by means of which longitude at sea could be determined within thirty miles. Two years later the Regent of France offered a hundred thousand francs for the same purpose with similar stipulations.

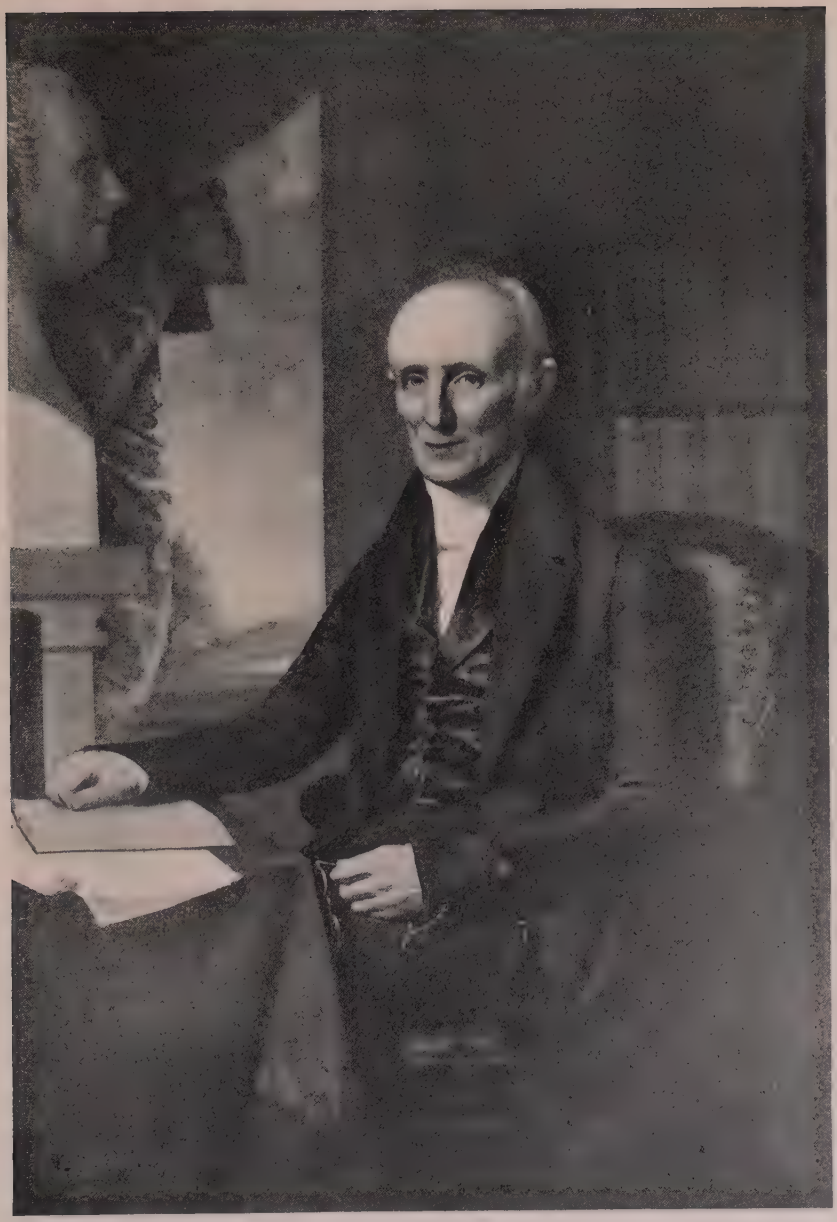
There lived in Yorkshire a young watchmaker, John Harrison, who learned to make better watches than anybody else in England, and he had followed with keen interest the experiments which attempted to find longitude by means of watches set to keep Greenwich Observatory time as nearly as possible. He determined to attack the problem in his way and to compete for these royal prizes if it meant the devotion of a lifetime to

the art of making chronometers. He spent years in making one instrument after another until in 1736 he carried to Greenwich a "gridiron pendulum clock" which was placed on board a ship bound for Lisbon. It proved to be accurate enough to correct the ship's reckoning of observations by several miles, and was a notable improvement on any other timepiece of the day.

The Royal Commission urged Harrison to drop all other work and make a business of competing for the prizes, and offered to supply him with funds. For twenty-four years John Harrison strove to make a chronometer that should win the twenty thousand pounds. He was sixty-eight years old when, in 1761, he wrote the Commission that he had a chronometer which he was willing to send on a trial voyage, and asked that his son William be allowed to go with it to take care of the precious instrument.

The Commission sent the chronometer out in a ship bound to Jamaica in order that its mechanism might be tested by extremes of climate and temperature. On arriving at Jamaica the chronometer had varied but four seconds from Greenwich time. When the ship returned to England after an absence of 147 days, the total variation was found to be less than two minutes, or eighteen miles of longitude. The Commission demanded that the chronometer be given another trial, and it was sent to Barbados on a voyage five months long, at the end of which it showed a variation of only sixteen seconds from Greenwich time, which meant that John Harrison's chronometer had lost or gained an average of about two-thirds of a second a week.

The Yorkshire watchmaker, after a lifetime of service, had won a momentous victory, but more exacting tests were demanded of his masterpiece and he was threatened with death from old age before he was finally given the twenty thousand pounds. Thenceforth the chronometer slowly made its way



Nathaniel Bowditch, author of "The Practical Navigator"

among ship owners as a necessary article of the captain's equipment and the most important contribution to navigation since the magnetic compass.

Old-fashioned mariners with an eye to expense continued to find their longitude by means of lunar observations for half a century and more after the chronometer had been perfected, and in American merchant vessels the chronometer may be said to belong to the nineteenth century era of navigation. "Dead reckoning" and lunar observations were the main-stays of the Salem sea captains in the days of their greatest activity over distant seas, and their fellow-townsman, Nathaniel Bowditch, author of "The Practical Navigator," was a far greater man, and more useful to them, than John Harrison of Yorkshire.

The log-line and sandglass have been discarded on steamers of to-day in favor of the patent log with its automatic registering mechanism, but the old-fashioned method of measuring the ship's course is used on sailing vessels the world over. It gave to the language of the sea the word "knot" for a nautical mile, and the passenger on board the thirty-thousand-ton express liner of the Atlantic "steamer lanes" talks of her six hundred and odd knots" per day without knowing how the word came into use, or that at the taffrail of the white-winged bark or ship passed in midocean the logline and glass are being used to reckon the miles in genuine old-fashioned "knots," just as they were employed a century ago.

The "log" is a conical-shaped canvas bag, or a triangular billet of wood so attached to the "log-line" that it will drag with as much resistance as possible. The line is wound round a reel, and is divided at regular intervals into spaces called "knots." These are marked on the line by bits of rag or leather; at the first knot is a plain piece of leather, at the second a piece of leather with two tails; at the third a knot is tied in

the line, and so on according to a simple system which enables the observer to identify the sequence and number of the "knots." The glass is like an hourglass, but the sand is carefully measured to run through in exactly fourteen or twenty-eight seconds. The logline and its knots are carefully measured to correspond with the glass. That is, if the sand runs out in twenty-eight seconds, the distance between two knots of the line bears the same ratio to the length of a real "knot," or nautical mile as the twenty-eight seconds for which the sandglass is set bears to an hour of time. Therefore the number of "knots" of the line unreeled out over the stern of the ship while the sand is running in the glass gives the number of miles which she is traveling per hour.

When the speed is to be read, one man throws overboard the "log" and line, while another stands ready with the glass. The first twenty or thirty fathoms of line are allowed to pay out before the knots are counted. When the drag has settled quietly in the sea astern and anchored itself, a white rag tied to the line marks the instant for turning the glass. As the bit of white rag flashes over the rail the man with the reel begins to count the knots that slip past, the glass is set running, and when the last trickle of sand has sifted through, the man holding it shouts "stop her." The other man with the log reel notes the number of knots paid out, and down on the ship's logbook go the figures as the number of miles per hour the ship is making through the water.

The log and sandglass, along with the sounding lead, are survivals of a vanished age of sea life, perhaps the only necessary aids to navigation which are used to-day precisely as our forefathers used them. For this reason, and also because the log and glass played so vital a part in the day's work of the navigators of such ports as Salem, they have been discussed at some length in this introduction to a sketch of the life of Nathaniel

Bowditch, for his place among the truly great men of his time, great in benefactions to humanity, cannot be perceived by the landsman without some slight knowledge of the conditions which then existed in the vastly important science of deep-water navigation.

The nineteenth century had to thank this seafaring astronomer of Salem for its most valuable working treatise on navigation which illustrates with singular aptness the fact, often overlooked, that the ship captain is a practical astronomer and this his calling has been more and more safeguarded by methods of applied science. Or as Professor Simon Newcomb has expressed it:

"The usefulness of practical astronomy and the perfection it has attained may be judged from this consideration: take an astronomer blindfolded to any part of the globe, give him the instruments we have mentioned, a chronometer regulated to Greenwich or Washington time, and the necessary tables, and if the weather be clear so that he can see the stars, he can, in the course of twenty-four hours tell where he is in latitude and longitude within a hundred yards."

For more than a century the name of Nathaniel Bowditch has been known in the forecastle and cabin of every American and English ship, and a volume of "The Practical Navigator" is to be found in the sea kit of many a youngster who aspires to an officer's berth. The book is still one of the foremost authorities in its field, a new edition being published by the United States Hydrographic Office every three or four years. A multitude of landlubbers who have no knowledge of seafaring as a calling have heard of "Bowditch" as a name intimately linked with the day's work on blue water. At his death in 1838, his fellow mariners of the East India Marine Society, of which he had been president, spread upon their records a resolution which voiced the sentiment of shipmasters in every port and sea:

"Resolved, That in the death of Nathaniel Bowditch a public, a national, a humane benefactor has departed; that not this community, nor one nation only, but the whole world has reason to do honor to his memory; that when the voice of eulogy shall be still, when the tear of sorrow shall cease to flow, no monument will be needed to keep alive his memory among men, but as long as ships shall sail, the needle point to the north, and the stars go through their appointed course in the Heavens, the name of Dr. Bowditch will be revered as one who helped his fellowmen in time of need, who was and is to them a guide over the pathless ocean, and of one who forwarded the great interest of mankind."

This ocean pathfinder of Salem, Nathaniel Bowditch, made no important discoveries in the science of navigation, but with the intellect and industry of a true mathematical genius, he both eliminated the costly errors in the methods of navigation used in 1800, and devised much more certain and practicable ways of finding a ship's position on the trackless sea. So important were the benefits he wrought to increase the safety of shipping that when the news of his death was carried abroad, the American, English and Russian vessels in the port of Cronstadt half-masted their flags, while at home the cadets of the United States Naval School wore an official badge of mourning, and the ships at anchor in the harbors of Boston, New York and Baltimore displayed their colors at half-mast. The London *Atheneum* said of "The Practical Navigator," in the days when no love was lost between British and American seamen:

"It goes, both in American and British ships, over every sea of the globe, and is probably the best work of the sort ever published."

What Nathaniel Bowditch did was to undertake the revision of a popular English handbook of navigation by John Hamilton Morse in which his acute mind had detected many blunders

which were certain to cause shipwreck and loss of life if mariners continued to use the treatise. This work was found to be in need of so radical an overhauling that in 1802 Bowditch published it under his own name, having corrected no fewer than eight thousand errors in the tables and calculations, including such ghastly and incredible mistakes as making 1800 a leap year in reckoning the tables of the sun's declination and thereby throwing luckless shipmasters as many as twenty-three miles out of their true position at sea. It was declared at the time that several ships had been lost because of this one error.

Expert opinion hailed the work of Bowditch with such eulogies as the following:

"It has been pronounced by competent judges to be, in point of practical utility, second to no work of man ever published. This apparently extravagant estimate of its importance appears but just, when we consider the countless millions of treasure and of human lives which it has conducted and will conduct in safety through the perils of the ocean. But it is not only the best guide of the mariner in traversing the ocean; it is also the best instructor and companion everywhere, containing within itself a complete scientific library for his study and improvement in his profession. Such a work was as worthy of the cultured author's mind as it is illustrative of his character, unostentatious, yet profoundly scientific and thoroughly practical, with an effective power and influence of incalculable value."

At a meeting of the East India Marine Society on May 6, 1801, "to examine a work called 'The New American Practical Navigator,' by Nathaniel Bowditch, a committee of sagacious and experienced shipmasters, veterans of the seas beyond the Cape of Good Hope and the Horn, submitted the following report:

"After a full examination of the system of navigation presented to the Society by one of its members (Mr. Nathaniel

Bowditch), they find that he has corrected many thousand errors in the best European works of the kind; especially those in the tables for determining the latitude by two altitudes, in those of difference of latitude and departure, of the sun's right ascension of amplitudes, and many others necessary to the navigator. Mr. Bowditch has likewise in many instances greatly improved the old methods of calculation, and added new ones of his own. That of clearing the apparent distance of the moon, and sun or stars from the effects of parallax and refraction is peculiarly adapted to the use of seamen in general, and is much facilitated (as all other methods are in the present work), by the introduction of a proportion table into that of the corrections of the moon's altitude. His table nineteenth, of corrections to be applied in the lunar calculations has the merit of being the only accurate one the committee is acquainted with. He has much improved the tables of latitudes and longitudes of places and has added those of a number on the American coast hitherto very inaccurately ascertained.

"This work, therefore, is, in the opinion of the committee, highly deserving of the approbation and encouragement of the Society, not only as being the most correct and ample now extant, but as being a genuine American production; and as such they hesitate not to recommend it to the attention of navigators and of the public at large.

Jonathan Lambert
Benjamin Carpenter
John Osgood
John Gibant
Jacob Crowninshield
} Committee

"Approved, Benjamin Hodges, President.
"Moses Townsend, Secretary.

"Salem, May 13, 1801."

This report is dry reading for the landsman, but it concerned matters of the most vital import to many thousand sea captains, who later blessed the name of this astronomer and mathematician of Salem.

As a shipmaster, Nathaniel Bowditch made a somewhat incongruous figure among the sturdy, full-blooded, simple-minded seamen of his port and his time. He was an intellectual prodigy, a thinking machine, and his tastes were not at all those of the practical navigator and trader overseas. He served his time at sea, and acquitted himself successfully, largely because he was trained for the calling of his father, Habakkuk Bowditch, who had begun his career on shipboard.

The family was in straitened circumstances when Nathaniel came into the world in 1773, and his period of schooling was exceedingly brief. At the tender age of seven he was sent to a Salem "seminary of learning," the master of which drilled his pupils' minds by making them spell at frequent intervals that uncouth monster of words "honorificabilitudinity." The Bowditch offspring survived this ordeal and at twelve years was apprenticed to a ship chandler. In this tarry environment he learned algebra and "could not sleep after his first glance at it." An old British sailor taught the lad what he knew of the elements of navigation after hours in the ship chandler's shop. The precocious love for mathematics had set the lad's brain on fire and he reveled in problems which would have baffled the wisest old heads of Salem.

While Nathaniel was still in his teens his ambition received a mighty impetus by the discovery of a treasure trove of learning, the philosophical library of Dr. Richard Kirwan,* a famous

* Dr. Richard Kirwan (1733–1812) was born in Cloughballymore, Ireland. He was a distinguished investigator and writer in the fields of mineralogy, chemistry, and meteorology, a member of the Edinborough Royal Society, the Royal Irish Academy, and a number of foreign academies. He received an honorary degree of LL.D. from the University of Dublin, and declined a bar-

Irish scientist. This precious collection of abstruse literature had come to Salem in a manner highly characteristic of the time and place. While cruising off the British coast during the Revolution, an audacious privateer of Beverly snapped up a merchant vessel and took out her cargo as lawful prize of war. Among the plunder was the library of this luckless Doctor Kirwan, which he had been in the act of shipping from Ireland to England. The privateer came home to Beverly and her booty was sold, according to custom. Several gentlemen of Salem clubbed together, purchased the books, and used them to found the library of the Salem Atheneum, which institution lives even unto this day and is housed in a beautiful new building of colonial design on Essex Street.

Nathaniel Bowditch never forgot his youthful obligation to this source of learning and wrote in his will:

"It is well known that the valuable scientific library of the celebrated Dr. Richard Kirwan, was during the Revolutionary War, captured in the British Channel on its way to Ireland,* by a Beverly privateer and that by the liberal and enlightened views of the owners of the vessel, the library thus captured was sold at a very low rate, and in this manner was laid the foundation upon which has since been established the Philosophical

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onetcy offered him by Lord Castlereagh. His works were translated into Russian, German and French. The capture of Doctor Kirwan's library was a misfortune of sufficient importance to find mention in the National Dictionary of Biography which relates:

"In 1776, Kirwan, having conformed to the established church, was called to the Irish bar, but threw up his studies after ten years, and pursued scientific studies in London, exchanged for Greek at Cregg in 1773. He resided in London from 1777 to 1787, and became known to Priestley, Cavendish, Burke, and Horne Tooke. He corresponded with all the savants of Europe; his Wednesday evenings in Newman St. were the resort of strangers of distinction; the Empress Catharine of Russia sent him her portrait. His library, dispatched from Galway to London on 5th Sept., 1780, was captured by an American privateer. Elected a fellow of the Royal Society on 24th Feb. 1780, he received the Copley medal in 1782 for a series of papers on chemical affinity."

* A probable error of memory as the library was on its way to England according to other sources of information.

Library so-called, and the present Salem Atheneum. Thus in early life I found near me a better collection of Philosophical and Scientific books than could be found in any other part of the United States nearer than Philadelphia, and by the kindness of its proprietors I was permitted freely to take the books from that library and to consult and study them at pleasure. This inestimable advantage has made me deeply a debtor to the Salem Atheneum, and I do therefore give to that institution the sum of one thousand dollars, the income thereof to be forever applied to the promotion of its objects, and the extension of its usefulness."

Dr. Richard Kirwan had the shadowy consolation of being compelled to furnish enlightenment to this hostile port of Salem, but the most important benefit reaped by this singular privateering adventure was the stimulus it conveyed to the mind of young Nathaniel Bowditch. He became wholly submerged in the volumes of the Transactions of the Royal Society of London. Indeed, he copied one book after another, making these manuscripts with infinite pains in order that he might possess them and carry them to sea with him. He was in his teens when he copied "A complete collection of all the Mathematical Papers of the Philosophical Transactions; Extracts from various Encyclopedias and from the Memoirs of the Paris Academy; a complete copy of Emerson's Mechanics, a copy of Hamilton's Conics; extracts from Gravesand's and Martyn's Philosophical Treatise; extracts from Bernoulli, etc., etc."

At the age of seventeen Bowditch began to learn Latin without a teacher in order that he might read Newton's Principia, and when he was old enough to vote "he was unsurpassed in mathematical attainments by any one in the Commonwealth." But he must needs earn his bread and go to sea, and so in 1795 Nathaniel made his first voyage as captain's clerk in the Salem ship *Henry*, Captain Prince, to Mauritius. His sea life covered

a period of nine years, during which he made five voyages, one of them to Manila in 1796–7, in the ship *Astrea*, as supercargo with Captain Prince. The *Astrea* was the first American ship to fly the stars and stripes in the harbor of Manila, a fact of some historical worth. The American trade to the Orient was then in its beginnings and it was Elias Hasket Derby, who, with characteristic enterprise, sent the *Astrea* to Manila in search of sugar, pepper and indigo, of which she fetched home a large and valuable cargo.

Nathaniel Bowditch kept a journal of this voyage as was required by the laws of the East India Marine Society, and his journal, written in a precise and delicate hand, is preserved in the Society's collection of records. His impressions of the capital city of the Philippines in 1797 read in part as follows:

"The city of Manila is about three or four miles in circumference, is walled all around, and cannon are placed at proper intervals, but we were unable to get much information with respect to the state of the place, as they were shy of giving any information to foreigners. The buildings within the wall are all of stone, and none except the churches is more than two stories high, on account of the violent earthquakes which they generally have at the breaking up of the monsoons. The month of March is when they most expect them, but on the fifth of November, 1797, we experienced several violent shocks at about 2 P. M. which came from the northward, and proceeded in a southerly direction, continuing with violence nearly two minutes. It threw down a large house half a league from the city, untiled several buildings, and did much other damage. It was not observed on board the ship lying off the bar. The motion of the earthquake was quicker than those usual in America, as the latter are generally preceded by a rumbling noise; the former was not.

Nathaniel Bowditch's chart of Salem harbor

"The suburbs of Manila are very extensive; most of the business is done there. The houses of the wealthier class are of two stories, built of bamboo with thatched roofs. No house can be built in the suburbs without the particular permission of the Governor, fearing if they were too high an enemy might make use of them, as was the case when the English took the place formerly, for one of the churches near the walls was very serviceable to them

"All the women have a little of the Indian blood in their veins, except the lady of the Governor and two or three others, though by a succession of intermarriages with Europeans they have obtained a fair complexion. The natives (like all other Malays) are excessively fond of gaming and cock-fighting. A theatre is established for the latter business from which the government draws an immense revenue, the diversion being prohibited at any other place. Sometimes there are five or six thousand spectators, each of whom pays half a real. A large sum arises from the duties on tobacco and cocoa wine. Tobacco is prohibited, but if you smuggle any on shore it cannot be sold for more than the ruling cost in America, notwithstanding the price is very high. Particular people, licensed by the King, are the only persons allowed to deal in it.

"All the natives chew *dreca* and *betel*, though not mixed with opium as in Batavia. This with chewing and smoking tobacco make their teeth very black. The segars used by the women, and which they smoke all day, are made as large as they can possibly get into their mouths. The natives are about as honest as their neighbors, the Chinese; they stole several things from us, but by the goodness of the police we recovered most of them.

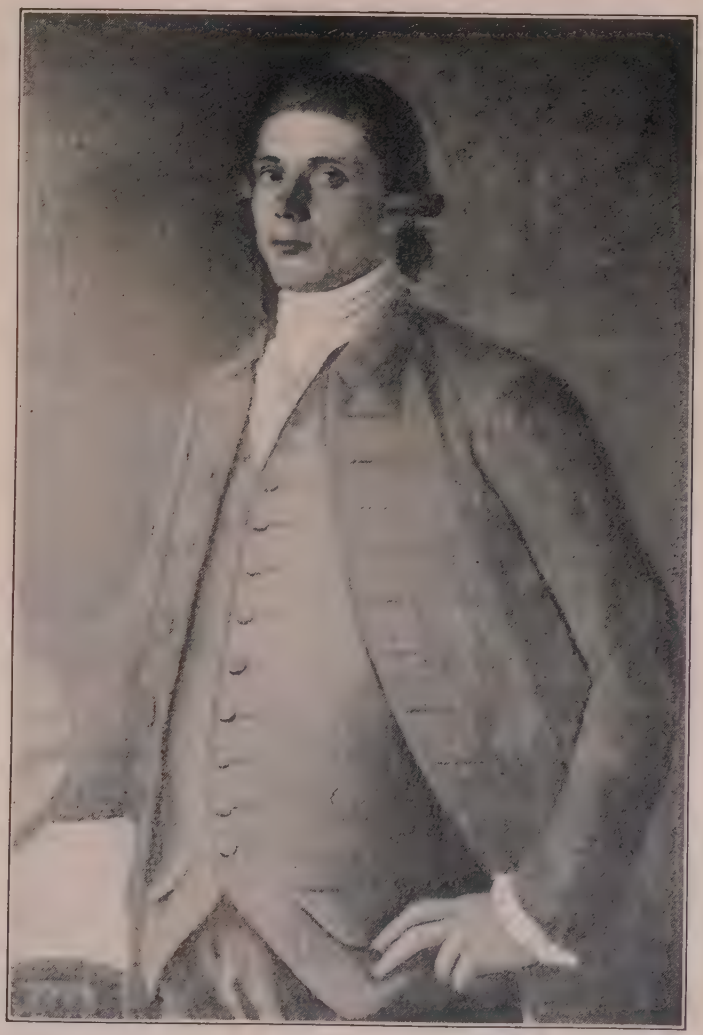
"On the second of December, 1797, thieves broke into the house where we lived, entered the chamber where Captain Prince and myself were asleep, and carried off a bag containing

$1,000 without awakening either of us, or any of the crew of the longboat sleeping in an adjoining chamber.

"The guard boat discovered them as they were escaping and pursued them. They, in endeavoring to escape, ran afoul of a large boat, which, upsetting them, the money went to the bottom, and, what was worse, the bag burst and the money was all scattered in the mud, where the water was eight feet deep. However, by the honesty of the captain of the guard, most of it was recovered. The thieves were caught, and, when we were there in 1800, Mr. Kerr informed us that they had been whipped, and were to be kept in servitude several years.

"The same day another robbery was committed, equally as daring. The day the indigo was shipped, the second mate came ashore with several of the people to see it safe aboard. The boats we had provided, not taking all of it, we sent the remainder aboard with a black fellow as a guard, who was esteemed by Mr. Kerr as an honest man, but he had been contriving, it seems, to steal a couple of boxes. When the cases containing the indigo had passed the bar, a small boat came aboard with two boxes filled with chips, stones, etc., appearing in every respect like those full of indigo, and, pretending that we had put on board two wrong boxes, they exchanged their boxes for two real boxes of indigo, but, in bringing them ashore, they were detected and the indigo returned.

"There are great numbers of Chinese at Manila. It is from them most of the indigo is purchased. They trade considerably with China; their junks arrive at Manila in January, and all their goods are deposited in the custom-house. Some of these cargoes are valued at a million of dollars, the duties on which amounted to nearly $100,000. The Chinese at Manila retain all the customs of their country, excepting those respecting religion and a few other things of small moment."



Captain Benjamin Carpenter of the *Hercules*, 1792

When the *Astrea* arrived at Manila on this voyage, Captain Prince was asked by another shipmaster how he contrived to find his way in the face of the northeast monsoon by dead reckoning. He replied that "he had a crew of twelve men, every one of whom could take and work a lunar observation, as well for all practical purposes, as Sir Isaac Newton himself, if he were alive."

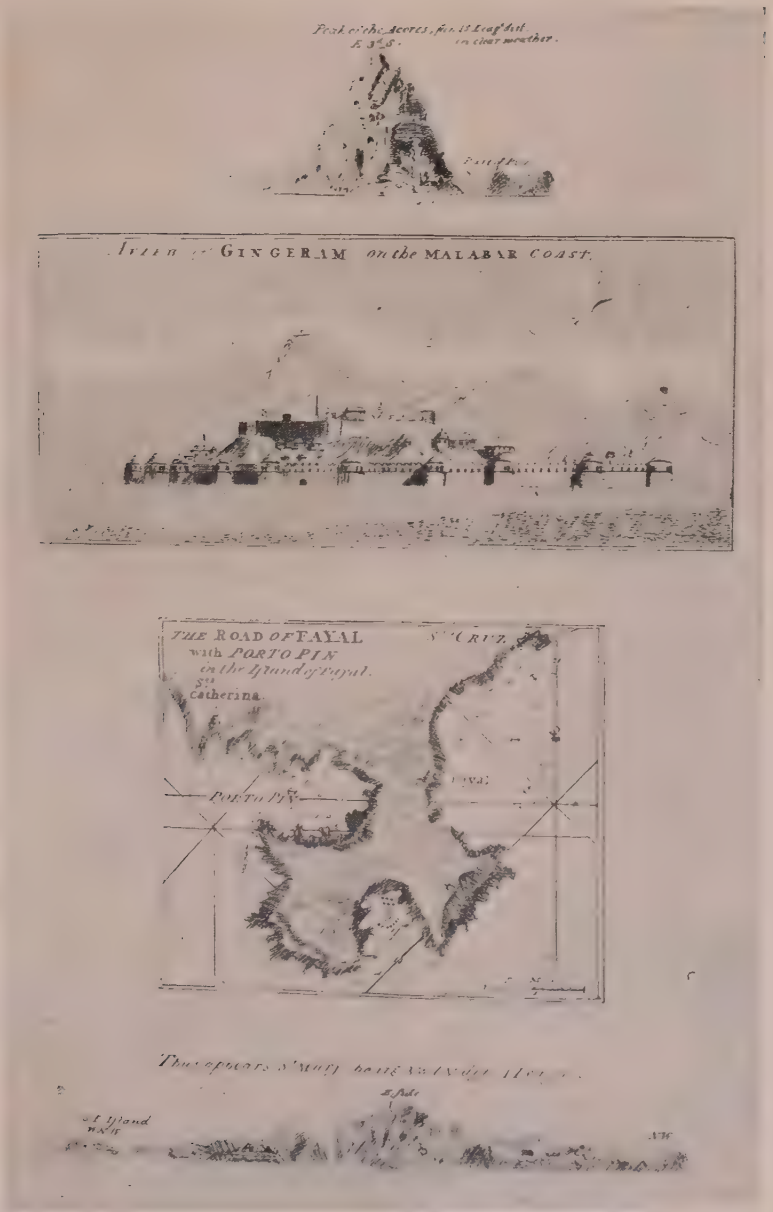
During this dialogue Nathaniel Bowditch, the supercargo, who had taught these sailors their navigation while at sea, "sat as modest as a maid, saying not a word but holding his slate pencil in his mouth," according to Captain Prince who also used to relate that "another person remarked there was more knowledge of navigation on board that ship than ever there was in all the vessels that have floated in Manila Bay."

During his seafaring years this singular mariner, Nathaniel Bowditch, learned French thoroughly, and studied Italian, Portuguese and Spanish. One who sailed with him said, "all caught a zeal to learn on board his ships. The whole crew of twelve men on board the *Astrea* later became captains, first and second mates. At sea his practice was to rise at a very early hour in the morning, and pursue his studies till breakfast, immediately after which he took a rapid walk for half an hour, and then went below to his studies till half-past eleven o'clock, when he returned and walked till twelve o'clock, the hour at which he commenced his meridian observations. Then came dinner, after which he was engaged in his studies till five o'clock; then he walked till tea time, and after tea was at his studies till nine o'clock in the evening. From this hour till half-past ten o'clock he appeared to have banished all thought of study, and while walking he would converse in the most lively manner, giving us useful information, intermixed with amusing anecdotes, and hearty laughs, making the time delightful to the officers who walked with him, and who had to quicken their

pace to accompany him. Whenever the heavenly bodies were in distance to get the longitude, night or day, he was sure to make his observations once and frequently twice in every twenty-four hours, always preferring to make them by the moon and stars on account of his eyes. He was often seen on deck at other times, walking rapidly and apparently in deep thought, when it was well understood by all on board that he was not to be disturbed, as we supposed he was solving some difficult problem. And when he darted below the conclusion was that he had got the idea. If he was in the fore part of the ship when the idea came to him, he would actually run to the cabin, and his countenance would give the expression that he had found a prize."

In keeping with this picture is the story of Bowditch's behavior when during his third voyage, from Cadiz to Alicante, his ship was chased by a French privateer. The Yankee captain decided to make a fight of it and Bowditch was assigned to hand powder on deck from the magazine. One of the officers, going below after the vessel had been cleared for action found the supercargo sitting on a keg of powder with his slate in his lap, absorbed in making calculations.

Nathaniel Bowditch had made the sea serve him, both to gain a livelihood and to test his theories of practical navigation for the benefit of his fellow seamen. But he did not consider "The Practical Navigator" to be an achievement by which his intellectual powers should be measured. His *magnus opus*, the fond labor of his best years was the translation and commentary of the monumental work of the great French astronomer, La Place, entitled "*Mécanique Celeste*" (Celestial Mechanics). So much of his own learning appeared in his exhaustive notes that the American edition of four volumes was a lasting memorial to the industry, knowledge and researches of Nathaniel Bowditch, and was the foremost American achievement in scientific




From the log of the *Hercules*, showing the beautiful penmanship with which Captain Carpenter adorned his sea journals

letters during the early nineteenth century. It won a solid fame for Nathaniel Bowditch, both at home and abroad. Where one American, however, has heard of his edition of *Mécanique Celeste*, a thousand have studied the pages of his "Practical Navigator," which is a living book to-day.

Shortly after he retired from the sea, Doctor Bowditch was elected president of the Essex Fire and Marine Insurance Company and continued in that office until 1823, declining professorships at Harvard, West Point and the University of Virginia. In 1823 he was persuaded to move his residence to Boston as actuary of the Massachusetts Hospital Life Insurance Society which position he held until his death in 1836. A self-taught scientist, a notable benefactor of mankind, Nathaniel Bowditch was with singular fitness, a son of Salem in the days when its splendid race of navigators were his fellow-townsmen. He loved the storied seaport in which he was born, and he was generally beloved for those very genuine qualities characteristic of the shipmasters among whom he lived. There was a rare simplicity and an absence of all false pride in the reasons which he gave to his executors for making a bequest to the Salem Marine Society.

"He told us, and all our children," his sons wrote to the officers of the society, "at the time of executing his will that his father, Habakkuk Bowditch, for nearly twenty years received from your charity fund the annual sum of fifteen dollars or thereabouts, so that his own food and clothing when a boy were in part derived from this source. Under these circumstances, we felt with him, that he had incurred a debt of gratitude toward your society which justified and indeed required from him an acknowledgement in return."

# CHAPTER XIV

## THE VOYAGES OF NATHANIEL SILSBEE*

## (1792–1800)

NEITHER myself nor the chief mate of the ship for that voyage (Mr. Charles Derby) had attained the age of twenty-one years when we left home. I was not then twenty years of age, and it was remarked by the naval officer on taking the ship's papers from the Custom House that it was the first instance in which papers had been issued from that office to a vessel bound to the East Indies, the captain and chief mate of which were both minors."

This is what young Nathaniel Silsbee was able to record of the year 1792 when he took command of the new ship *Benjamin*, one hundred and sixty-one tons, laden with a costly cargo of merchandise and bound out from Salem for the Cape of Good Hope and India, "with such instructions as left the management of the voyage very much to my own discretion." It was only four years earlier than this that the Salem ship *Atlantic* had flown the first American flag ever seen in the harbors of Bombay and Calcutta, and the route to those distant seas was still unfamiliar to these pioneers who swept round the Cape of Good Hope to explore new channels of trade on the other side of the world.

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* Historical Collections of the Essex Institute, Vol. XXXV, Jan., 1889. *Biographical Notes:* By *Nathaniel Silsbee.* (A paper written by him, "for the perusal of his family," between 1836 and 1850, and from which most of the material for this chapter was obtained.)

In these latter times a nineteen-year-old lad of good family is probably a college freshman without a shadow of responsibility, and whose only business care has to do with the allowance provided by a doting parent. He is a boy, and is ranked as such. When our forefathers were creating a merchant marine whose achievements form one of the finest pages of American history, seafaring lads were men at twenty, ruling their quarter-decks and taming the rude company of their forecastles by weight of their own merits in brains and pluck and resourcefulness.

Nathaniel Silsbee, a captain in the India trade at nineteen, was not a remarkably precocious mariner a century and more ago. He could say of his own family:

"Connected with the seafaring life of myself and my brothers, there were some circumstances which do not usually occur in one family. In the first place each of us commenced that occupation in the capacity of clerk, myself at the age of fourteen years; my brother William at about fifteen, and my brother Zachariah at about sixteen and a half years of age. Each and all of us obtained the command of vessels and the consignment of their cargoes before attaining the age of twenty years, viz., myself at the age of eighteen and a half, my brother William at nineteen and a half, and my brother Zachariah before he was twenty years old. Each and all of us left off going to sea before reaching the age of twenty-nine years, viz., myself at twenty-eight and a half; William at twenty-eight, and Zachariah at twenty-eight and a half years."

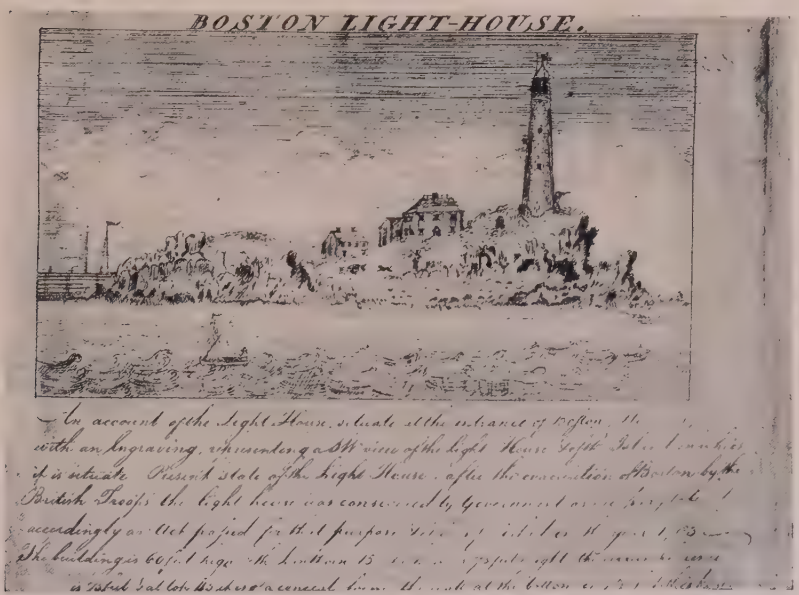
In other words, these three brothers of Salem had made their fortunes before they were thirty years old and were ready to stay ashore as merchants and shipowners, backed by their own capital. A splendid veteran of their era, Robert Bennet Forbes of Boston pictured his very similar experience in this manner:

"At this time of my life (1834), at the age of thirty, I had

become gray and imagined myself approaching old age. I had attained the summit of my ambition. I was what was then thought to be comfortably off in worldly goods; I had retired from the sea professionally and had become a merchant; I had contributed something toward the comfort of my mother; I had paid off large debts contracted in building my ship, and I began to think more of myself than I ever had done. Looking back to 1824 when I was content in the command of a little ship of 264 tons, on a salary of six hundred dollars per annum, I conceded that I had arrived at the acme of my hopes. I had been blessed with success far beyond my most ardent expectations.

"Beginning in 1817, with a capital consisting of a Testament, a 'Bowditch,' quadrant, chest of sea clothes and a mother's blessing, I left the paternal mansion full of hope and good resolution, and the promise of support from my uncles. At the age of sixteen I filled a man's place as third mate; at the age of twenty I was promoted to a command; at the age of twenty-six I commanded my own ship; at twenty-eight I abandoned the sea as a profession, and at thirty-six was at the head of the largest American house in China."

Nathaniel Silsbee, therefore, was in tune with the time he lived in when at fourteen he embarked on his first voyage, from Salem to Baltimore as a captain's clerk in a small schooner. His father had been an owner of several vessels in the West India trade, but losses at sea and other commercial misfortunes compelled him to take the boy from school and launch him in the business of seafaring. Three voyages in a coaster were followed by several months of idleness during which he "was uneasy and somewhat impatient" until a chance was offered to ship as supercargo of the brig *Three Sisters* bound on one of the first American voyages around the Cape of Good Hope in the winter of 1788. His wages for that voyage were five dollars a




Pages from the log of the ship *Hercules*, 1792, remarkable for the beauty of their draftsmanship in pen and ink. These drawings were made in the log while at sea

month, and all the property which his father could furnish as an "adventure" or private speculation, was six boxes of codfish worth eighteen dollars, "most of which perished on the outward passage."

The *Three Sisters* went to Batavia, thence to China where she was sold, and her crew came home in another Salem ship, the *Astrea.* Young Silsbee studied navigation in his spare time at sea, and gained much profit from the instruction of the captain. His strenuous boyhood seems remote in time when one finds in his memoirs that "while absent on that voyage the present constitution and form of the government of the United States which had been recommended by a convention of delegates from the several states, held in 1787, was adopted by eleven of the then thirteen United States, and went into operation on the fourth day of March, 1789, with George Washington, as President and John Adams as Vice-President of the United States."

A week after his return from China Nathaniel was setting out with his father in a thirty-ton schooner for a coasting trip to Penobscot, these two with brother William comprising the ship's company. They made a successful trading voyage, after which the youthful sailor sailed to Virginia as captain's clerk. He was now seventeen, a tough and seasoned stripling ready to do a man's work in all weathers. At this age he obtained a second mate's berth on a brig bound to Madeira. When she returned to Salem he was offered the command of her, considerably in advance of his eighteenth birthday. The death of his mother recalled him to Salem and deferred his promotion.

In the same year, however, we find him captain of a sloop and off to the West Indies with specie and merchandise. The boyish skipper was put to the test, for a succession of furious gales racked his vessel so that she was sinking under his feet, and he "endured such incessant and intense anxiety as prevented my having a single moment of sound sleep for thirteen entire days

and nights." He made a West Indian port, however, and his vessel was declared unseaworthy by a survey of shipmasters and carpenters. "At a somewhat later age," he confesses and you like him for it, "I should probably have acceded to that decision and abandoned the vessel, but I then determined otherwise, caused some repairs to be made on the vessel, which I knew to be entirely uninsured, invested the funds in West India produce, and proceeded therewith to Norfolk, and thence to Salem where the vessel was considered unfit for another voyage, and where I had the good fortune to be immediately offered by the same owner the charge of a brig and cargo for the West Indies."

It was after this next voyage that Captain Silsbee, veteran mariner that he was at nineteen, was given the ship *Benjamin* already mentioned. In those early foreign voyages of one and two years duration, the captain was compelled to turn his hand to meet an infinite variety of emergencies. But he usually fought or blundered a way through with flying colors, impelled by his indomitable confidence in himself and the need of the occasion. This young shipmaster of ours had somehow qualified himself as a rough-and-ready surgeon, or at least he was able to place one successful and difficult operation to his credit. He was already living up to the advice of another New England mariner whose code of conduct was: "Always go straight forward, and if you meet the devil, cut him in two and go between the pieces." This is how Captain Silsbee rose to the occasion:

"In an intensely cold and severe storm on the first night after leaving home, our cook (a colored man somewhat advanced in age) having preferred his cooking-house on deck to his berth below for a sleeping place, had his feet so badly frozen as to cause gangreen to such an extent as to render amputation of all his toes on both feet absolutely necessary for the preservation of his life. Having neither surgical skill nor surgical instru-

ments on board the ship, the operation was a very unpleasant and hazardous one, so much so that no one on board was willing to undertake the direction of it. I was most reluctantly compelled to assume, with the aid of the second mate, the responsibility of performing the surgical operation with no other instruments than a razor and a pair of scissors, and which, in consequence of the feeble state of the cook's health required two days to accomplish.

"The cook was very desirious to be landed and left at one of the Cape de Verde Islands, and for that purpose I proceeded to the Island of St. Jago, where I found an English frigate at anchor. Her surgeon came on board our ship at my request and examined the cook's feet and to my great satisfaction, pronounced the operation well performed, assured me that there remained no doubt of his recovery, and advised me by all means to keep him on board ship under my own care in preference to putting him ashore. With the cook's approbation I followed the surgeon's advice and in the course of a few weeks the cook was able to resume his duties, recovered his usual health and made several subsequent voyages."

After dispatching the business of the cook, the boy skipper proved his ability as a merchant of quick adaptability and sound judgment. While on the passage from the Cape of Good Hope to the Isle of France (Mauritius) he fell in with a French frigate which gave him news of the beginning of war between France and England. When this news reached the Isle of France prices rose by leaps and bounds and the cargo of the Benjamin was promptly sold at a profit that dazzled her commander. As fast as payments were made he turned the paper currency into Spanish dollars. Then for six months an embargo was laid on all foreign vessels in port. Captain Silsbee sat on his quarter deck and refused to worry. During this time in which his ship lay idle, his Spanish dollars increased to three

times the value of the paper money for which he had shrewdly exchanged them, while for lack of an outlet the products of the island had not advanced in cost.

He therefore abandoned his plan of keeping on to Calcutta, sold his Spanish dollars, loaded his ship with coffee and spices at the Isle of France, and made a bee line for Salem. He proceded no farther than the Cape of Good Hope, however, where he scented another opportunity to fatten his owner's pockets. "I found the prospect of a profitable voyage from thence back to the Isle of France to be such," said he, "that I could not consistently with what I conceived to be my duty to my employer, (although no such project could have been anticipated by him, and although attended with considerable risk) resist the temptation to undertake it. At that time the Cape of Good Hope was held by the Dutch who had joined England in the then existing war against France, and it so happened that I was the only master of a foreign vessel then in port of whom a bond had not been required not to proceed from thence to a French port. . . . There being two other Salem vessels in port by which I could send home a part of my cargo, I put on board those vessels such portion of my cargo as I knew would considerably more than pay for the whole cost of my ship and cargo at Salem, sold the residue of the merchandise, and invested the proceeds in a full cargo of wine and other articles which I knew to be in great demand in those islands."

At the Isle of France the captain sold this cargo for three times its cost, and again loaded for Salem. When he was almost ready to sail, it was reported that another embargo was to be laid forthwith. Hastily putting to sea he was obliged to anchor at Bourbon next day to take on provisions. Here he had a rather mystifying experience which he related thus:

"Just as I was about stepping from the wharf into my boat the French Governor of the island ordered me to his presence,

which order I obeyed with strong apprehensions that some restraint was to be put upon me. On meeting the Governor he asked me, 'How long do you contemplate staying in Bourbon?' My answer was, 'Not more than a day or two.' 'Can't you leave here to-night?' he asked. I replied, 'If you wish it.' He then added, 'As you had the politeness to call on me this morning, and as I should be sorry to see you injured, hearken to my advice and leave here to-night if possible.' He cautioned me to secrecy, and I was in my boat and on board my ship as soon as possible after leaving him. There was a war-brig at anchor in a harbor a little to windward of my own vessel; toward midnight I had the anchor hove up without noise, and let the ship adrift without making any sail until by the darkness of the night we had lost sight of the war-brig, when we made all sail directly from the land. At daylight the war-brig was sent in pursuit of us, under a press of sail but fortunately could not overtake us, and toward night gave up the chase."

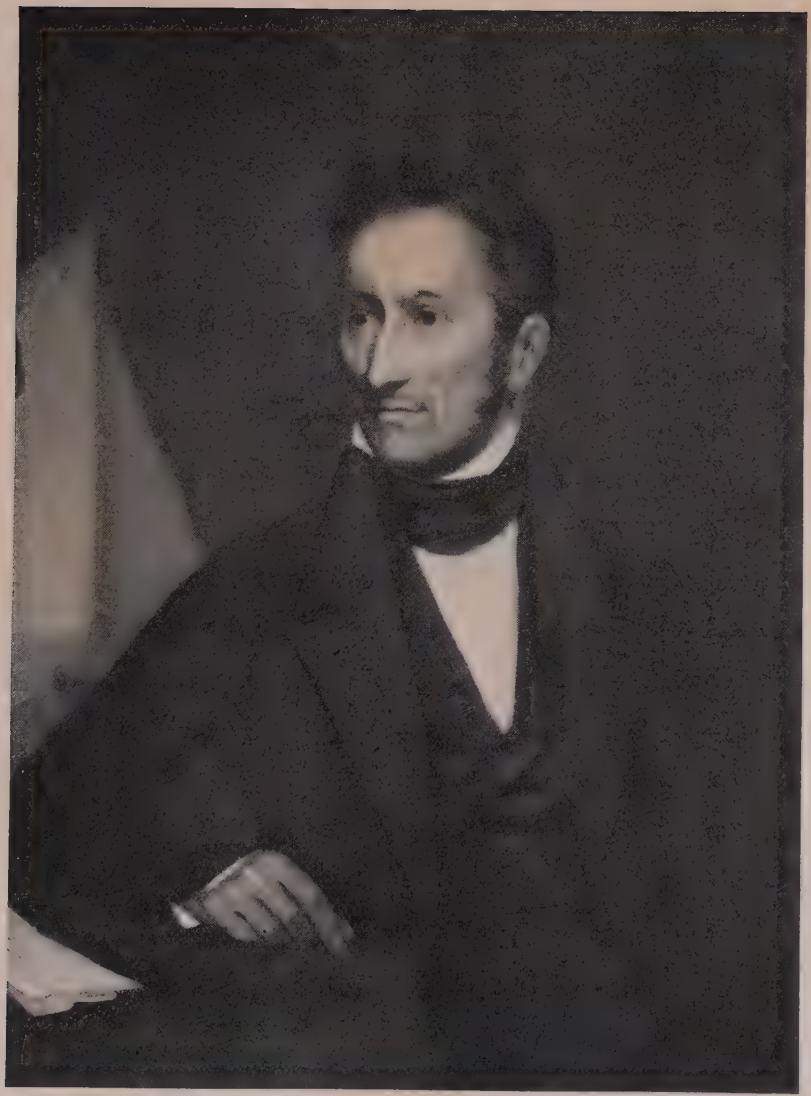
The *Benjamin* arrived at Salem after a voyage of nineteen months. Nathaniel Silsbee had earned for his employer, Elias Hasket Derby, a net profit of more than one hundred per cent. upon the cost of the ship and cargo. The captain was given five per cent. of the outward, and ten per cent. of the value of the return cargo, as his share for the voyage besides his wages, and he landed in Salem with four thousand dollars as his perquisites, "which placed me in a condition to gratify the most anxious and at that time almost the only wish of my heart, which was to increase and secure the comforts of my mother, sisters and brothers." And one of his first acts was to purchase the house and land formerly owned by his father, at a cost of fifteen hundred dollars and placed the whole of it at his mother's disposal.

Being now twenty-one years old, and with a capital of two thousand dollars to risk as an "adventure" of his own account, Captain Silsbee took the *Benjamin* to Amsterdam, bound for

India, with a cargo double the value of his first venture in her. He carried with him as clerk his brother William, aged fifteen, and furnished him with a sum of money as an "adventure" for his own account. Again the Isle of France lured him from the path to the Indies, and he sold his cargo there for "enormously high prices." The young merchant navigator was so rapidly finding himself that he loaded his own ship and sent her home in command of her mate and then bought at the Isle of France another ship of four hundred tons for ten thousand dollars out of his employer's funds. She was a new vessel, the prize of a French privateer and proved a good investment. Loading her with coffee and cotton and shipping a new crew he sailed for Salem in the wake of the *Benjamin*.

This homeward voyage was varied by an episode of such frequent occurrence in that era that it was commonplace. "A short time before our arrival in Boston," Captain Silsbee related, "we were for two days in company with and a few miles from a schooner which we suspected to be a privateer watching for a favorable opportunity to attack us. Having on board the ship six guns and twenty-five men, I was determined to resist, as far as practicable the attack of any small vessel. On the afternoon of the second day that this vessel had been dogging us, she bore down upon us with the apparent intention of executing what we had supposed to be her purpose, which we were, as I imagined, prepared to meet. But on calling the crew to quarters, I was informed by one of my officers that there were four or five seamen who were unwilling thus to expose themselves, alleging that they had neither engaged nor expected to fight.

"On hearing this, all hands being on deck, I ordered every passage-way which led below deck to be securely fastened; then calling to me such of the crew as had not engaged to fight, I immediately sent them up the shrouds to repair the ratlin *and to*



Captain Nathaniel Silsbee.

*perform other duties which they had engaged to do*, in the most exposed part of the ship. Finding themselves thus exposed to greater danger than their shipmates, they requested, before the schooner had come in gunshot of us, to be recalled from their situation and allowed to participate in the defense of the ship, which request was granted. All our six guns were placed on one side of the ship, and we succeeded by a simultaneous discharge of the whole of them, as soon as the schooner had approached within reach of their contents, in causing her to haul off, and hasten from us."

Captain Silsbee was handling his employers' ventures so shrewdly that his own shares in the cargoes was amounting to what seemed to him a small fortune. At twenty-two years of age, in 1795, he was able to purchase one-fourth part of a new ship called the *Betsy*. In this vessel as commander he sailed to Madras, Malaysia and Calcutta and returned after an absence of seventeen months. While at Madras he was a witness of and an actor in an incident of the kind which directly led to the second war between America and Great Britain, a collision at that time only sixteen years away. He tells it in these words, which clearly portray the lawless impressment of American seamen which was in operation on every sea.

"I received a note early one morning from my chief mate that one of my sailors, Edward Hulen, a fellow townsman whom I had known from boyhood, had been impressed and taken on board of a British frigate then lying in port. Receiving this intelligence I immediately went on board my ship and having there learned all the facts in the case, proceded to the frigate, where I found Hulen and in his presence was informed by the first lieutenant of the frigate that he had taken Hulen from my ship under a peremptory order from his commander to visit every American ship in port and take from each of them one or more of their seamen.' With that information I returned

to the shore and called upon Captain Cook, who commanded the frigate, and sought first by all the persuasive means that I was capable of using and ultimately by threats to appeal to the Government of the place to obtain Hulen's release, but in vain. I then, with the aid of the senior partner of one of the first commercial houses of the place, sought the interference and assistance of the civil authorities of Madras, but without success, it being a case in which they said they could not interfere.

"In the course of the day I went again to the frigate and in the presence of the lieutenant, tendered to Hulen the amount of his wages, of which he requested me to give him only ten dollars and to take the residue to his mother in Salem, on hearing which the lieutenant expressed his perfect conviction that Hulen was an American citizen, accompanied by a strong assurance that if it was in his power to release him he should not suffer another moment's detention, adding at the same time that he doubted if this or any other circumstance would induce Captain Cook to permit his return to my ship.

"It remained for me only to recommend Hulen to that protection of the lieutenant which a good seaman deserves, and to submit to the high-handed insult thus offered to the flag of my country which I had no means of either preventing or resisting, beyond the expression of my opinion to Captain Cook in the presence of his officers, and in terms dictated by the excited state of my feelings. After several years detention in the British Navy and after the Peace of Amiens, Hulen returned to Salem and lived to perform services on board privateers armed in Salem in the late war between this country and England."

The extraordinary hazards of maritime commerce in the last years of the eighteenth century are emphasized in the story of the voyages made by Captain Silsbee to the Mediterranean in his next ship, the *Portland*, of which he owned one third. In

the winter of 1797, he sailed from Boston with "brother William" as second mate, and stopping at Cadiz, learned of the decrees of the French government which made liable to condemnation every vessel of whatever nation, on board of which might be found any articles of the production or manufacture of Great Britain or any of its territories. While these decrees greatly increased the risk of capture in the Mediterranean, they also vastly enhanced the prices of Colonial merchandise. It seemed a commercial gamble worth the risk and Nathaniel Silsbee determined to make for Genoa or Leghorn. First, however, he erased from his nautical instruments the name of their English maker, put on shore a quantity of English coke from the cook's galley, and weeded out everything else which could be considered as having a British pedigree.

He was no more than five days from Cadiz when a French privateer brig from Marseilles captured and carried the *Portland* into Malaga. The harbor was filled with American and other foreign vessels all flying the French flag, a depressing picture for the Salem crew. Every one of the vessels with their cargoes was condemned by the French, except the good ship *Portland*, Nathaniel Silsbee, master. His escape was due to his own bulldog persistence and resolute bearing in this grave crisis of his fortunes.

After anchoring at Malaga no boat was allowed to approach his ship, nor was he allowed to go ashore or to communicate with anyone until a day had passed. Then he was taken ashore, under guard of a squad of French soldiers, to the office of the French consul. The owner and commander of the privateer were present, and, single-handed, the American shipmaster was questioned in the most minute manner regarding every article of merchandise on board his vessel. Where were they produced? How and by whom imported into the United States? How came they into the possession of the owners of his ship?

In his recollection of this extraordinary interview Captain Silsbee stated:

"And I was commanded by that mighty man, for at that time the French consul held the Spanish authorities of the place in as much subjection as he did the humblest domestic, to answer each and all his lengthy and precise interrogatories in 'five words.' . . .

"After the examination was closed the record of it was placed with the ship's papers on the shelves of the consular office with similar papers appertaining to thirty or forty other vessels then under sequestration. At about eleven o'clock at night I was informed that I might return to my ship in charge of the same guard which brought me ashore. I then asked the Consul when I might expect his decision upon my case. He said the decision must be 'in turn,' and that as there were many cases before mine, which would require possibly two or three months, but certainly not less than one month, mine could not be decided short of that time. . . . After some disputation upon that point I told the Consul that I would not leave his office, unless taken from thence by force, until his decision was made. Toward midnight the Consul and his clerk, together with the owner and officer of the privateer, went out of the office, leaving me there in charge of two porters and a watchman with whom I remained during that night, and saw nothing more of the Consul until about 9 o'clock in the morning. He expressed some surprise at finding me there, and asked if I could give him a written order to my officers directing them and the crew to assist in unclosing such parts of the cargo as would enable a survey which he would immediately appoint."

The Yankee skipper cheerfully complied with this encouraging request, but stood by his guns in the consular office, nor did he budge until after a siege of twenty-four hours. He then deserted his post only to seek a notary under guard and enter a

formal protest. Late in this second day the French consul reported that the survey showed every article of the cargo to be a production of British colonies, and therefore damned beyond repeal. Silsbee ingenuously replied that he had expected such a verdict but that along with other false statements, he begged leave to ask whether *mace* was considered the product of a British colony? This appeared to stagger the Consul, and Silsbee sought his bench and prepared to spend another night in the office. At nine o'clock in the evening the harassed Consul capitulated, handed the ship's papers to the master and told him to take his ship and go to the devil with her, or anywhere else he pleased.

Although he had been forty hours without sleep, the happy victor hastened to make ready for sea and escape from Napoleon's clutches as soon as ever he could. Head winds baffled him, however, and while waiting at anchor he called to see the American consul whom he had not been permitted to visit or send for during his detention. So astonished was the representative of our infant republic that he refused to accept the word of the captain until he had seen the French consul in confirmation. It seemed preposterous that this Salem younker could have slipped out of the trap while a dozen or more American ships had been waiting for weeks and months doomed to condemnation. The Frenchman privately admitted that "the apparent determination of this terrible fellow not to leave his office until his case was decided, had not been without some effect on the time and character of his decision."

It was out of the frying pan into the fire, for soon after reaching Genoa, a French army entered that port, declared an embargo, and began to fit out one fleet of the expedition which was to carry Napoleon's legions to Egypt. The Generals in charge hired such vessels as they could and requisitioned such others as they wanted to use as transports. The *Portland* being the best

and most comfortably fitted ship at Genoa, was selected, without the consent of her captain, for the transport of the Staff of the Army. Captain Silsbee failed to appreciate this honor, and after trying in vain to effect a release, decided to try to bribe his way clear. He had carried from home sufficient salt beef and pork for an India voyage, and he accidentally learned that the Bonaparte expedition was in great need of salted meat for the transports.

With sound strategy, Captain Silsbee had forty barrels of "salt horse" conveyed by night to a secure hiding place several miles beyond the outskirts of the city. Then he called upon the French General and asked him if he did not want to buy some provisions for the fleet.

"He answered affirmatively," wrote Captain Silsbee, "and added, 'you know it is in my power to take it at my own price.' I told him he should have every barrel of it at his own price, or even without price, if he would release my ship, that those were the terms, and the only terms on which he could or would have it. The general angrily threatened to take my provisions and make me regret having insulted him. Two days later he sent an order for me to appear before him which I did, when he demanded me to 'inform him promptly' where my forty barrels of provisions were, intimating a doubt of my having it, as his officers had not been able to find it. I told the General very frankly that if the ship which I commanded belonged wholly to myself, I might have felt not only willing but highly gratified to convey a part of the Staff of such an army on such an expedition, but that a large part of the ship and the proceeds of a valuable cargo belonged to other persons who had entrusted their property to my charge. . . . That avowal from me was met by a threat from the General to coerce me not only into a delivery of the provisions, but to the performance of any and every duty which he might assign to me; not only the ship, but

likewise her captain, officers and crew had been placed under requisition by the French Republic; a requisition not to be frustrated, he said, by any human being, while a subaltern officer who was present added with enthusiasm, 'Yes, sir, suppose God had one ship here, and the French wanted it, He must give it.'"

The Salem seafarer gave not an inch, but declared that a release of the ship was the only price which would drag the "salt horse" from its hiding place. On the following day, the General sent word that he was ready to yield to these terms. Napoleon's veterans could not get along without salt pork, and Captain Silsbee triumphantly dragged his forty barrels into town. His ship was restored to him, the General even promised to pay for the stores, and the hero very rightly summed it up, "I could not but consider that a more beneficial disposal of forty barrels of beef and pork had probably never been made than in this instance."

During the two years following Nathaniel Silsbee stayed ashore in order to promote his rapidly growing commercial ventures. He became tired of the inactivity of life on land, however, and in 1800 bought part of the ship *Herald* and loaded her for India with a crew of thirty men and ten guns. His memoranda of that voyage affords a fresh insight into the business methods of a typical Salem shipmaster of the old school. The *Herald* sailed "with a stock of sixty-three thousand dollars in specie and merchandise, and with credits authorizing drafts on England or the United States for about forty thousand dollars, making together over one hundred thousand dollars, which at that time was considered a very large stock. Of this, as in my previous voyages to India I furnished, besides my interest as owner of one fourth part of the vessel and cargo, five per cent. of the cost of the outward cargo, for which I was to take ten per cent. of the return cargo at the close of the voyage as my compensation for transacting the business thereof."

The master's account of that voyage contains some spirited passages. He took with him his other brother, Zachariah, who was now sixteen years old and eager to follow in the elder's footsteps. He left Calcutta in company with four other American ships with the captains of which he had entered into an agreement to keep company until they should have passed the southern part of Ceylon. Each of these ships carried from eight to twelve guns and sailing in fleet formation they expected to be able to defend themselves against the several French privateers which were known to be cruising in the Bay of Bengal. Of this squadron of American Indiamen Captain Nathaniel Silsbee, now an elderly man of twenty-seven, was designated as the Commodore.

"On the morning of the third day of November," as he tells it, "two strange sails were discovered a few leagues to windward of us, one of which was soon recognized to be the East India Company's packet ship *Cornwallis* of eighteen guns, which had left the river Hoogly at the same time with us. At about eight o'clock, A. M., the other ship stood toward the *Cornwallis*, soon after which the latter bore down upon us under full sail, commencing at the same time a running fight with the other ship which then displayed French colors. We soon perceived that they were both plying their sweeps very briskly, that the Frenchman's grape was making great havoc on the *Cornwallis*, and that the crew of the latter ship had cut away her boats and were throwing overboard their ballast and other articles for the purpose of lightening their ship and thereby facilitating their escape. The sea was perfectly smooth, and the wind very light, so much so that it was quite mid-day before either of the ships was within gunshot. By this time we five American ships were in a close line, our decks cleared of a large stock of poultry, (which with their coops could be seen for a considerable distance around us) and every preparation made

to defend ourselves to the extent of our ability. This display of resistance on our part seemed to be quite disregarded by the pursuing ship, and she continued steering directly for my own ship which was in the center of the fleet, until she was fully and fairly within gunshot, when my own guns were first opened upon her, which were instantly followed by those of each and all of the other four ships.

"When the matches were applied to our guns, the French ship was plying her sweeps, and with studding-sails on both sides, coming directly upon us; but when the smoke of our guns, caused by repeated broadsides from each of our ships, had so passed off as to enable us to see her distinctly, she was close upon the wind and going from us. The captain of the Cornwallis which was then within hailing distance, expressed a wish to exchange signals with us, and to keep company while the French ship was in sight. She was known by him to be *La Gloire*, a privateer of twenty-two nine-pounders and four hundred men. His request was complied with and he having lost all his boats, I went on board his ship where our signals were made known to him and where were the officers of the *Cornwallis*, who acknowledged the protection which we had afforded them in the most grateful terms. The *Cornwallis* continued with us two days, in the course of which the privateer approached us several times in the night, but finding that we were awake, hauled off and after the second night we saw no more of her."

At the close of this voyage, in his twenty-eighth year, Captain Nathaniel Silsbee was able to say that he had "so far advanced his pecuniary means as to feel that another voyage might and probably would enable him to retire from the sea and to change his condition on shore." He married the daughter of George Crowninshield and began to build up a solid station in life as one of the most promising merchants and citizens of Salem. He had launched his two younger brothers in life and they were

masters of fine ships in the India trade "with as fair prospects of success as young men thus situated could hope for."

He made only one long voyage after he had his own home and fireside, but his interests were weaving to and fro between Salem port and the faraway harbors of the Orient, the South Seas and Europe. The Embargo Acts of 1808 and 1812 occasioned him heavy losses, but these were somewhat repaid by the success of the privateers in which Nathaniel Silsbee is recorded as holding shares.

By 1815, he had risen to such prominence as a representative American merchant that he was named by the United States Government as one of the commissioners to organize the Boston branch of the "Bank of the United States." He became one of the Massachusetts delegation to Congress, and was a United States Senator from 1826 to 1835, representing his state in company with Daniel Webster.

Dying in 1850, Nathaniel Silsbee left bequeathed to his home town the memory of his own life as a tribute to the sterling worth and splendid Americanism of the old-time shipmasters of Salem. Trader and voyager to the Indies as a captain in his teens, retired with a fortune won from the sea before he was thirty, playing the man in many immensely trying and hazardous situations, this one-time Senator from Massachusetts was a product of the times he lived in.

# CHAPTER XV

## THE VOYAGES OF CAPTAIN RICHARD CLEVELAND

## (1791–1820)

PERHAPS the finest type of the Salem shipmaster of the age when her seamen were the vikings of American commerce, was Captain Richard Cleveland who wrote as capably as he sailed and fought and whose own record of his voyages inspired the *London Literary Examiner* to comment in 1842:*

"Few things in De Foe, Dana, or any other truth teller are more characteristic than Mr. Cleveland's account of his voyage from Havre to the Cape of Good Hope. Surely never before was there such an Indiaman and with such a cargo and such a crew."

Captain Cleveland was born in 1773 and he reached manhood and the height of his career of the most romantic adventure when Salem commerce was also at the zenith of its prosperity. He was the eldest son of a father worthy to have such a son, Captain Stephen Cleveland, whose life at sea began when at the age of sixteen he was kidnapped by a British press gang in the streets of Boston, in 1756. This redoubtable sire served for several years on board a British frigate, was promoted to the rank of midshipman and fought the French fleet off the Channel ports. He had returned to live in Salem when the Revolu-

* Captain Cleveland's "Narrative of Voyages and Commercial Enterprises" was published in 1842 at Cambridge, Mass. In 1886 appeared a small volume, "Voyages of a Merchant Navigator," compiled from his letters and journals by his son, H. W. S. Cleveland.

tion began and became active in fitting out privateers to harry the British flag which he hated most heartily for having been compelled to serve under it. He built the *Pilgrim* brig which alone captured more than fifty British prizes and was one of the fastest armed ships sent out of Salem. From the Continental Congress he received a commission only a month after the Declaration of Independence to command the brig *Despatch** in a voyage to Bordeaux after military stores and guns for the patriotic forces. His was the first government vessel to fly the new American flag in a harbor of Europe and he returned in safety with a cargo which greatly helped the struggling cause in his country in the early days of the war.

His son, Richard, hero of this narrative, followed the sea as a matter of course, being an ambitious Salem lad as well as the son of his father. At the age of fourteen he entered the counting house of Elias Hasket Derby, as told in a previous chapter. He learned the mercantile side of a seafaring life and with the other lads in the employ of that famous old house, risked his little savings as "adventures" in the vessels which were sailing to the Far East. His education, beyond the counting house, was limited to a few years in the public schools of Salem before he had much more than passed into his teens. Yet this Richard Cleveland, mariner, by virtue of his native ability and the influences of the times that bred him, made himself a man of the most liberal education, in the finest sense of the phrase, and in addition to this, he could lay claim to more genuine culture than most college university graduates of to-day.

He was only eighteen when his father thought him old enough to go to sea. As captain's clerk, he sailed his first voyage with Captain Nathaniel Silsbee, and became second mate before the ship returned to Salem. This was the East Indiaman whose captain was not twenty years old; the chief mate, nineteen; and

* See Appendix C.

Richard Cleveland, second mate, at the same age. These rosy-cheeked lads carried the *Herald* to the Cape of Good Hope, thence into the Indian Ocean when warring powers and their privateers menaced every neutral vessel. Well might Richard Cleveland write of this remarkable beginning of his sea life:

"The voyage, thus happily accomplished, may be regarded, when taken in all its bearings, as a very remarkable one; first, from the extreme youth of all to whom its management had been entrusted; secondly, from the foresight, ingenuity, and adroitness manifested in averting and escaping dangers; in perceiving advantages and turning them to the best account; and thirdly from the great success attending this judicious management, as demonstrated by the fact of returning to the owner four or five times the amount of the original capital. Mr. Derby used to call us his boys, and boast of our achievements, and well might he do so, for it is not probable that the annals of the world can furnish another example of an enterprise, of such magnitude, requiring the exercise of so much judgment and skill, being conducted by so young a man, (Nathaniel Silsbee), aided only by still younger advisers, and accomplished with the most entire success."

In 1797, at the age of twenty-three, Richard Cleveland was in command of the bark *Enterprise* of Salem, bound for Mocha after a cargo of coffee. He had to abandon this plan, however, after reaching Havre, and his ship was ordered home. Her young master had no mind to lose the profits which he had hoped to reap from this venture, wherefore he decided to remain abroad, to send the ship home in command of the mate, and not to go back to Salem until he had played for high stakes with the fortunes of the sea. Thus began a series of voyages and adventures which were to take him around the globe through seven long years before he should see home and friends again. At Havre he bought on two years' credit, a "cutter-sloop" of only

forty-three tons, in size no larger than the yachts whose owners think it venturesome to take them beyond the sheltered reaches of Long Island Sound on summer cruises.

His plan was, in short, to fit out and freight the absurd cockle shell of a merchantman for a voyage from Europe to the Cape of Good Hope and thence to the Isle of France, in the Indian Ocean, a fertile and prosperous colony which at that time was a Mecca for Yankee ships.

His cutter, the *Caroline*, was driven ashore and wrecked before the coast of France was passed on his outbound voyage. The dauntless skipper got her off, however, worked her back to Havre and made repairs for a second attempt. This experience ought to have convinced any ordinary mariner that his little craft was not fit for a voyage half round the world, but Richard Cleveland, turning loss into profit, was able to note of this disaster:

"My credit, however, has not suffered in the least on this account, for I have not only found enough to repair the damages, but shall put in $1,000 more, so that my cargo, although in a vessel of only forty tons, will amount to $7,000. I now wait only for a wind to put to sea again."

While at sea during the three months' voyage to the Cape of Good Hope, Captain Cleveland described in his journal the crew with which he had undertaken to navigate the *Caroline* to her faraway destination. "It was not until the last hour I was at Havre," said he, "that I finally shipped my crew. Fortunately they were all so much in debt as not to want any time to spend their advance, but were ready at the instant, and with this motley crew, (who, for aught I knew, were robbers and pirates), I put to sea.

"At the head of my list is my mate, a Nantucket lad, whom I persuaded the captain of a ship to discharge from before the mast, and who knew little or nothing of navigation, but is now

capable of conducting the vessel in case of accident to me. The first of my fore-mast hands is a great, surly, crabbed, raw-boned, ignorant Prussian, who is so timid aloft that the mate has frequently been obliged to do his duty there. I believe him to be more of a soldier than a sailor, though he has often assured me that he has been a boatswain's mate of a Dutch Indiaman, which I do not believe as he hardly knows how to put two ends of a rope together. He speaks enough English to be tolerably understood.

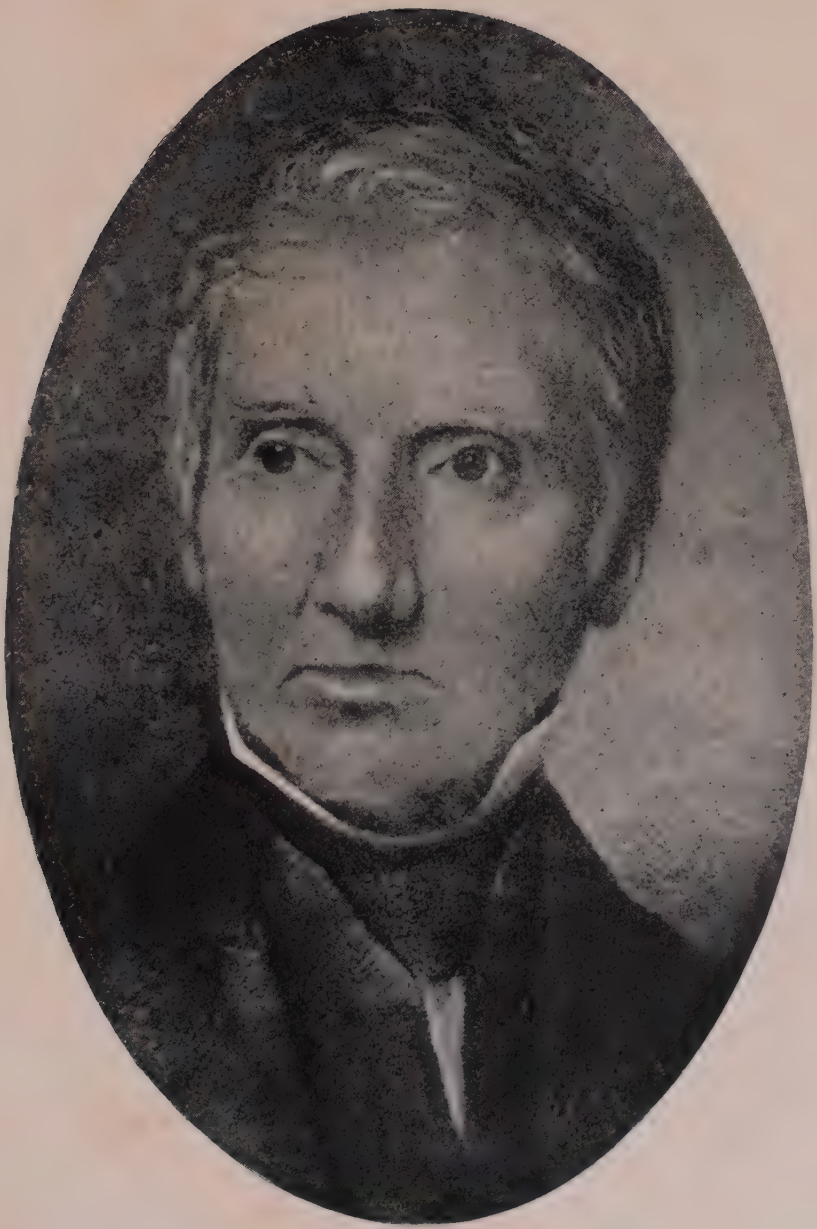
"The next in point of consequence is my cook, a good-natured negro and a tolerable cook, so unused to a vessel that in the smoothest weather he cannot walk fore and aft without holding onto something with both hands. This fear proceeds from the fact that he is so tall and slim that if he should get a cant it might be fatal to him. I did not think America could furnish such a specimen of the negro race (he is a native of Savannah), nor did I ever see such a perfect simpleton. It is impossible to teach him anything, and notwithstanding the frequency with which we have been obliged to take in and make sail on this long voyage, he can hardly tell the main-halliards from the mainstay. He one day took it into his head to learn the compass, and not being permitted to come on the quarter-deck to learn by the one in the binnacle, he took off the cover of the till of his chest and with his knife cut out something that looked like a cartwheel, and wanted me to let him nail it on the deck to steer by, insisting that he could ''teer by him better 'n tudder one.'

"Next is an English boy of seventeen years old, who from having lately had the small-pox is feeble and almost blind, a miserable object, but pity for his misfortunes induces me to make his duty as easy as possible. Finally I have a little ugly French boy, the very image of a baboon, who from having served for some time on different privateers, has all the tricks

of a veteran man-of-war's man, though only thirteen years old, and by having been in an English prison, has learned enough of the language to be a proficient in swearing.

"To hear all these fellows quarrelling, (which from not understanding each other, they are very apt to do) serves to give one a realizing conception of the confusion of tongues at the Tower of Babel. Nobody need envy me my four months' experience with such a set, though they are now far better than when I first took hold of them. . . . Absence has not banished home from my thoughts; indeed I should be worse than a savage were I to forget such friends as I have, yet such is now my roving disposition that were it not for meeting them, I doubt if I should ever return."

In the last lines quoted, Richard Cleveland, with such a crew on such a venture, was able to find contentment with his lot. It is evident from his graphic description that he was the only capable officer or seaman on board his cutter, yet he navigated her without serious accident to the Cape of Good Hope, and would not have touched there except for the urgent need of fresh water. The French Directory had given him official dispatches to carry to the Isles of France and Bourbon, and while this private mission might protect him against capture by French privateers, it laid him open to the grave risk of confiscation by whatever English authorities he chanced to fall athwart of. He successfully concealed these dispatches, but the officials of the Cape viewed him with suspicions for other reasons. They could not but believe that so hazardous a voyage in so small a craft must be somehow in the secret behalf of the French government, and although they could find no evidence after thoroughly overhauling the *Caroline* and her papers, they decided to make an end of this audacious voyage by purchasing the vessel. Of the excitement caused by his arrival at the Cape, Captain Cleveland relates:



Captain Richard Cleveland

"The arrival of such a vessel from Europe naturally excited the curiosity of the inhabitants of the Cape; and the next morning being calm, we had numerous visitors on board, who could not disguise their astonishment at the size of the vessel, the boyish appearance of the master and mate, the queer and unique characters of the two men and boy who composed the crew, and the length of the passage we had accomplished. Various were the conjectures of the good people of the Cape as to the real object of our enterprise. While some viewed it in its true light as a commercial speculation, others believed that under a mask we were employed by the French government for the conveyance of their dispatches, and some even went so far as to declare their belief that we were French spies, and as such deserving immediate arrest and confinement. Indeed our enterprise formed the principal theme of conversation at the Cape during the week after our arrival."

Captain Cleveland's private letters, log, and all other documents found on board were taken ashore to the English admiral by whom he was treated very politely, "but the extreme importance of the blustering lieutenants was in the highest degree disgusting." After much parleying, the young skipper was given permission to export ten thousand dollars worth of cargo in another venture. He had realized a profit on his vessel without going to the Isle of France and was inclined to think himself well out of an awkward situation when fresh trouble arose because the merchant to whom he sold his cargo fell afoul of the Custom House regulations, which entanglement resulted in the seizure both of the cutter and the goods on board.

Facing ruin through no fault of his own, Captain Cleveland determined to appeal directly to Lord McCartney, governor of the Cape, explaining that the loss must fall on him as the luckless merchant could not make good the losses. "But how to write a suitable letter (to Lord McCartney) embarrassed me,"

said he. "I had no friends with whom to advise. I was entirely ignorant of the proper manner of addressing a nobleman, and at the same time was aware of the necessity of conforming to customary rules. In this dilemma I remembered to have seen, in an old magazine aboard my vessel, some letters addressed to noblemen. These I sought as models and they were a useful guide to me. After completing my letter in my best hand I enclosed it in a neat envelope and showed it to the admiral's secretary who appeared to be friendly to me. He approved of it and advised my taking it myself to his lordship immediately. As the schoolboy approached his master after having played truant, so did I approach Lord McCartney on this occasion."

The frank and straightforward appeal of the boyish American ship master moved the autocratic governor to interfere and the matter was decided in favor of the petitioner with trifling loss. "The success of my letter was the theme of public conversation in the town," he commented, "and was the means of procuring me the acquaintance of several individuals of the first respectability."

Four months passed before he was able to get passage on a merchant vessel bound for Batavia, where he intended looking about for another venture upon which to stake his capital. Finding nothing to his liking in the Dutch East Indies, Captain Cleveland proceeded to Canton. At this port he made up his mind to attempt a voyage to the northwest coast of America to buy furs from the Indians. As soon as this daring project was fairly under way he wrote home in a much more optimistic vein than the circumstances warranted:

"We have every possible advantage, a vessel well calculated for inland navigation, the best articles of trade that can be carried, a linguist who speaks the Indian language as well as his own, and officers experienced in the business. Should we

fail of success with all these advantages, it will be very extraordinary ill-fortune, and such as I don't choose to expect."

As a matter of fact, his vessel was a small cutter no larger than the *Caroline*, and his crew as worthless a set of beach-combing ruffians as ever disgraced a forecastle. The captain was twenty-five years old when he set sail from Canton in the winter of 1799, with a cargo of merchandise worth almost $20,000, representing all his cash and credit. His only chart for beating up the Chinese coast was a map drawn by a navigator whom he chanced to meet in port. Until he could weather the northern end of Formosa his course lay directly in the teeth of the northwest monsoon, with imminent danger of being stranded or battered to pieces by the wind. He paid his crew this handsome compliment:

"Having all hands on board twenty-one persons, consisting—except two Americans—of English, Irish, Swedes and French, but principally the first, who were runaways from the men-of-war and Indiamen, and two from a Botany Bay ship who had made their escape, for we were obliged to take such as we could get, served to complete a list of as accomplished villians as ever disgraced any country."

For a month on end the cutter fought her way up the Chinese coast, her company weary, drenched, and wretched, until the sailors had enough of such an infernal enterprise, and broke out in a full-fledged mutiny. With a handful who remained loyal, including the ungainly black cook previously described, Captain Cleveland locked up the provisions, mounted two four-pounders on the quarter-deck, crammed them with grape-shot, and armed his squad with flintlock muskets and pistols. A man with a lighted match was stationed beside each cannon, and the skipper told the mutineers that if they attempted to get provisions or to come above the hatches, he would blow them overboard. For one whole day the hostile companies were at

a dead-lock, until hunger gnawing, the mutineers asked that they be put ashore believing that once out of the vessel they could dictate their own terms.

Captain Cleveland landed and marooned them. For two days the cutter lay off shore while the mutineers tried to patch up a truce. One man weakened and was taken aboard. Of what happened as the final chapter of this grim episode, Captain Cleveland wrote in his journal:

"At nine o'clock (A. M.) we hoisted the colors, fired a 4-pound cannon, and weighed anchor when they all came out from behind a rock, where they had doubtless been watching our motions. I then ordered the boat out, and with my second officer and four hands, well armed, went as near the beach as the surf would permit. I called them all down to the water side and told them I was then going away; that I knew there were several of them desirous of returning to their duty, but were deterred by the others; that if they would come forward I would protect them, and would fire at any one that tried to prevent them.

"They replied that they were all ready and willing to return to their duty, but the ringleaders (whom I had determined not to take on any account) were more ready than the others, and when they were rejected they swore none of the others should go, and presented their knives at the breasts of two of them, and threatened to stab them if they attempted to do so; a third seemed indifferent and a fourth was lying drunk on the beach. Having secured three, and one yesterday, which was four of them, and which, with a little additional precaution, was securing the success of the expedition, I did not think proper to put into execution my threat of firing on them.

"After dinner I sent the second officer with four hands, well armed, to make a last effort, but by this time those whose fate was decided, had persuaded the others to share it with them,

and had carried the drunken man out of reach, declaring that we dare not go on the coast of America with so feeble a crew, and we should take them all or none.

"Having now a light breeze from the westward and a favorable current, I concluded to have no further altercation with them, and immediately hoisted in the boat and made sail, leaving on the island of Kemoy, (which is about three hundred and fifty miles northeast of Canton) six of my most able men. This was such a reduction of our numbers as would require unceasing vigilance, and extraordinary caution to counteract, as the risk of being attacked by the Indians was of course increased in proportion to our diminished power of resistance."

The mariners in Canton had told Captain Cleveland that he could never win his way clear of Formosa and into the Pacific during the winter or monsoon season, but the staunch cutter, after mutiny, stranding, and fighting her way inch by inch for thirty-one days steered out across the open ocean. On her northerly course the weather was so heavy that the seas washed over her day after day, and Captain Cleveland scarcely knew what it was to wear dry clothes, have a meal cooked in the wave-drenched galley, or snatch a whole night's sleep.

After fifty-odd days of racking hardships the cutter fetched the Northwest coast and anchored in Norfolk Sound. Bulwarks or screens of hides were rigged along the decks in order to hide from the Indians the scanty muster-roll of the ship's company, lest they take her by boarding. For two months Captain Cleveland cruised among the bays and inlets along this wilderness coast, trading for sea-otter skins, and averting hostile attacks by the ablest vigilance, diplomatic dealings, and a show of armed force when it became necessary.

His hold was nearly filled when his cutter went hard aground on a sunken ledge, and was tilted, nose under, at an angle of forty-five degrees. "This position, combined with a rank heel

to starboard, made it impossible to stand on deck," wrote her skipper. "We therefore put a number of muskets into the boat, and prepared to make such resistance in case of attack as could be made by fifteen men crowded into a sixteen-foot boat. Our situation was now one of the most painful anxiety, no less from the prospect of losing our vessel and the rich cargo we had collected with so much toil, than from the apprehension of being discovered in this defenceless state by any one of the hostile tribes by whom we were surrounded. A canoe of the largest class, with thirty warriors well-armed had left us but half an hour before we struck, and they were now prevented from seeing us only by having passed around a small island. Should the vessel bilge, there existed scarcely any other chance for the preservation of our lives than the precarious one of falling in with some ship before we were discovered by Indians. . . .

"More than ten hours passed in this agonizing state of suspence, watching the horizon to discover if any savages were approaching; the heavens, if there were a cloud that might chance to ruffle the surface of the water; the vessel, whose occasional cracking seemed to warn us of destruction; and when the tide began to flow, impatiently observing its apparently sluggish advance, while I involuntarily consulted my watch, the hands of which seemed to have forgotten to move."

The cutter was floated during the following night, conveyed to a beach and careened until her crew could repair her damaged copper and planking. Soon after this Captain Cleveland set sail for the return passage to China, *via* the Sandwich Islands, and "indeed the criminal who receives a pardon under the gallows could hardly feel a greater degree of exultation." When he arrived at Canton, "several of the gentlemen who had predicted our destruction from attempting the voyage at the season we did, presumed, when they saw the cutter arrive, that we had

failed, which indeed they had anticipated from the arrival in Canton several months before of the mutineers whom we had left on the coast of China, and the sad stories they told of hardship, danger and cruel usage."

Captain Cleveland had secured his sea-otter skins at the rate of one flint-lock musket for eight prime pelts, and his cargo was worth sixty thousand dollars in the Canton market. For this return he had risked eleven thousand dollars, and his share of the profits amounted to two-thirds of the whole, or forty thousand dollars. He sold the cutter, and went to Calcutta in her as a passenger, with forty-six thousand dollars as his capital for another fling at fortune. He had been away from Salem a little more than two years, and at the age of twenty-five had wrested from the seas a competence sufficient to have comfortably supported him ashore. But he had no intention of forsaking the great game he was playing with such high-hearted assurance.

During the voyage from Canton to Calcutta while the cutter was off Malacca, "we saw a fleet of eleven Malay proas pass by to the eastward, from whose view we supposed ourselves to have been screened by the trees and bushes near which we were lying. On perceiving so great a number of large proas sailing together, we felt convinced they must be pirates, and immediately loaded our guns and prepared for defence; although conscious of the fact that the fearful odds between our crew of ten men and theirs, which probably exceeded a hundred for each vessel, left us scarce a ray of hope of successful resistance.

"We watched their progress therefore, with that intense interest which men may naturally be supposed to feel whose fortunes, liberty and lives were dependent on the mere chance of their passing by without seeing us. To our great joy they did so, and when the sails of the last of the fleet were no longer visible from our deck, and we realized the certainty of our

escape, our feelings of relief were in proportion to the danger that had threatened us. On arriving at Malacca, the curiosity of the people was greatly excited to know how we had escaped the fleet of pirates which had been seen from the town."

Arriving at Calcutta Captain Cleveland was disappointed in his expectations of sending home a cargo of goods upon terms which should swell his profits, so he began to plan a voyage in which the rewards might be in fairer proportion to the risks he was ready to undertake. The East India Company forbade communication between Bengal and the Isle of France, but Captain Cleveland foresaw an opportunity to pick up at a bargain the rich prizes and cargoes that French privateers were carrying into the latter port. Therefore, he bought a mite of a twenty-five ton pilot boat, had her sent to the Danish settlement of Serampore, put her under the Danish flag, and stole away into the Indian Ocean. For forty-five days he held on his course blistering under a tropic sun, and as he ingenuously explained to account for his foolhardiness: "Pleasing myself with the idea that all will turn out for the best, time passes as lightly with me as with most people, and I am persuaded that few people enjoy a greater share of happiness than myself, if you can conceive of there being any happiness in building airy castles and pursuing them nearly around the globe till they vanish, and then engaging in a fresh pursuit."

The youthful merchant navigator fared safely in his cockboat to the Isle of France and was again disappointed in his commercial air-castles. The privateers had sold their prizes and were winging it out to sea in search of more British plunder. For ten months he waited in the hope of a reopening of trade between America and the French colonies. At length he loaded seven thousand bags of coffee on board a Danish ship bound for Copenhagen, and sailed as a passenger. With him went Nathaniel Shaler of Connecticut, a sterling American

merchant whom he had met in the Isle of France and who was a partner in this coffee adventure to Copenhagen.

They sold their cargo for a large profit, and then began to look about for a vessel suitable to undertake a voyage to the west coast of South America, a project which the twain had worked out during their companionship at sea. They found at Hamburg a fast and roomy Virginia-built brig, the *Lelia Byrd*, which they bought. Shaler was made captain by the toss of a coin, Captain Cleveland signing the ship's papers as supercargo. While in Hamburg they had formed a warm friendship with a youthful Polish nobleman, Count de Rousillon, who had been an aide-de-camp to Kosciusko. His personality was most engaging, his love of adventure ardent, and his means slender, wherefore he embraced with enthusiasm the invitation to join the two young Americans in their voyage to South America. Alas, the glamor of such romance as was their fortune to enjoy has long since vanished from commerce, afloat and ashore. They were three seafaring "Musketeers" all under thirty years of age, setting forth to beard the viceroys of Spain.

Richard Cleveland had now been a cheerful exile from Salem for four years, following the star of his destiny in almost every ocean, escaping dangers uncounted with the skin of his teeth and by his sagacity, resolution and shrewdness finding himself richer for every audacious voyage. For two and a half years longer, he was to sail in the *Lelia Byrd* among the Spanish peoples of the South American coast before his wanderings should lead him home to Salem.

From Hamburg the brig went to Rio Janeiro where they were not allowed to trade, and thence doubled Cape Horn and reached Valparaiso in February in 1802. They were startled and alarmed to find four American vessels under detention by the Spanish government. After spirited correspondence with the Captain General at Santiago the *Lelia Byrd* was permitted

to buy supplies sufficient for resuming her voyage and to sell so much of the cargo as would pay for the same. While at anchor in the bay, Captain Cleveland and his friends witnessed a tragedy which convinced them that the sooner they could get to sea the better. The American ship *Hazard* of Providence, Captain Rowan, which had touched for provisions, had on board several hundred muskets shipped in Holland and consigned to the Northwest Coast. The Governor ordered Captain Rowan to deliver up these arms as violating treaty stipulations. The American skipper saw no good reason why he should obey and refused to let a file of Spanish soldiers on board his ship.

The Governor flew into a violent passion, ordered every American merchant ashore to be locked up in the castle, and commanded an eighteen-gun Spanish merchant ship to bring her broadside to bear on the *Hazard* and demand Captain Rowan's surrender under pain of being sunk at his moorings. The skipper replied that they might fire if they pleased, and nailed his stars and stripes to his masthead.

Shaler, Rousillon, and Cleveland, happening to be ashore, were swept up by the Governor's drag-net order and sent to the castle as prisoners. Next day they were offered liberty without explanation, but the indignant trio from the *Lelia Byrd* refused to be set free until a proper apology had been made them. It was finally agreed that as Captain Shaler was nominal master of the brig, he should stay in prison while his comrades made matters hot for the offending Governor.

This official refused to let them send a messenger to the Captain General and asked why in the devil they did not put to sea, and be grateful that they had escaped the dungeons or worse. To which young Richard Cleveland made reply (which the gifted Count turned into fluent and fiery Spanish) that they wanted satisfaction for being locked up without cause, and that Captain Shaler proposed to languish behind the bars until

he was informed why he had been put in. A day later, the situation remaining in *statu quo*, the Governor sent for Cleveland, asked if he were not second in command and angrily ordered him to extract his recalcitrant skipper from jail and go to sea on the instant. The Yankee replied that the apology or explanation was still lacking, and that the *Lelia Byrd* was only waiting for her captain who was a prisoner in the castle.

Meanwhile a letter had arrived from the Captain General ordering Captain Rowan of the *Hazard* to deliver up the arms which comprised part of his cargo, and make a second declaration respecting their lading. The muskets were sent ashore, and the supercargo sent to the Governor with the customs certificate made out in Amsterdam. Captain Rowan did not understand that he was expected to make this report in person, but the Governor considered himself and his Spanish dignity again insulted by the failure of the captain to appear.

Early in the morning, two hours before Americans were permitted to land, and therefore before Captain Rowan could obey another summons, two hundred Spanish soldiers who were no better than brigands, boarded the *Hazard* and took her from an unarmed crew of twenty-three men who had no forewarning. In the words of Captain Cleveland:

"This was done by order of the Governor, who stood on shore opposite the vessel and was a witness to the horrid scene of assassination and rapine that followed. Captain Rowan's life was saved by the humanity of the captain of a Spanish brig, who got into the cabin in advance of the rabble, as he had not time to save himself as the other officer had done, by retreating to the lazaretto. The plunder which ensued for the remainder of the day and the following night was such as to lighten the ship nearly a foot. Nor were the officers of rank backward in taking part in the pillage; and the custom house guards, far from preventing, were as eager as the rest in the work of robbery."

Captain Cleveland rushed to the Governor's palace and demanded with forceful Anglo Saxon threats, that he be allowed to send a statement overland to the Captain General, but he was told that if he did not want to share the fate of the *Hazard*, he had best put to sea. The persistence of this indomitable young Yankee at last wore down the Governor's resistance, and the message was sent to Santiago by courier.

The answer was to the surprising effect that Captain Cleveland and his comrades should receive the most complete satisfaction for the injuries done them, at which Nathaniel Shaler, still cooling his heels in the castle, consented to emerge with his self-respect untarnished. After days and days of further complications due to red-tape and an invincible hostility toward all other than Spanish vessels trading in those waters, Captain Cleveland and his doughty shipmates were able to bid a glad farewell to the Governor of Valparaiso, His Illustrious Excellency, Don Antonio Francisco Garcia Carrasco.

"The notoriety they had attained by these protracted quarrels with an ignorant, conceited, and pusillanimous official, rendered it injudicious to attempt to enter any other port of Chili or Peru," wherefore the *Lelia Byrd* was steered for the coast of Mexico, after gathering these proofs to convince far less astute shipmasters that the markets for American enterprise on the South American coast were not up to expectations. They made their first landing at San Blas, where the subordinate Spanish officials cordially received them. Rousillon went to the interior capital of Tipec to confer with the Governor, and alas, this peppery gentleman flew into a rage because his deputy at San Blas had dared to make a trading agreement with the Yankee brig without consulting him. Thus was brewed a tempest in a teapot, the upshot of which was that His Passionate Excellency at Tipec sent word that the *Lelia Byrd* must leave port or be attacked by a Spanish gunboat.

The diplomatic Rousillon thereupon undertook to go to the City of Mexico and solicit permission from the Viceroy to sell a part or the whole of the cargo. Captain Cleveland, finding the harbor of San Blas too hot to hold him, sailed for Three Marias Islands, sixty miles to the westward, there to wait until word was received from his emissary to the Viceroy. Three weary months passed in this empty fashion, at the end of which the two captains, Shaler and Cleveland, decided to risk a return to San Blas in the hope of finding some tidings of the mysteriously vanished Rousillon. They stole into the coast by night, and next day saw an Indian in a canoe who paddled out to them and delivered a letter from their absent comrade. He had succeeded in obtaining a concession to sell ten thousand dollars worth of goods at San Blas, and after two weeks of delay this part of the cargo was put ashore.

The sales dragged on with such interminable waste of time, however, that it was deemed best to leave Rousillon in Mexico to finish these transactions. He died before his mission was ended, and his friends and fellow seafarers mourned the loss of one who had become very dear to them and who had stood the test of their arduous life together.

The *Lelia Byrd* next proceeded to San Diego in search of sea-otter skins.* At this port they caught another Spanish Tartar

* "Several American trading craft made their appearance on the California coast this year, creating not a little excitement in some instances by attempts at smuggling in the success of which the people were hardly less interested than the Yankee captains. The *Lelia Byrd* was fitted out at Hamburg by Capt. Richard J. Cleveland, of Salem, Massachusetts, who had just made a fortune by a four years' voyage or series of commercial adventures in the Pacific, during which he had touched the northern coast of America, but not of California, in partnership with William Shaler, and sailed in November, 1801.

"An amusing feature of this and other similar narratives is the cool frankness with which the Americans and English present the evasion of all Spanish commercial and revenue regulations as an action altogether praiseworthy, and the efforts of the officials to enforce those regulations as correspondingly reprehensible." (From The History of California, by Herbert Howe Bancroft. Vol II. Page 10.)

in the person of the Commandant, Don Manuel Rodriguez, who boarded them with a file of dragoons, and left a guard on the ship, the sergeant of which volunteered the discouraging information that the Boston ship *Alexander* had left port a few days before, after being robbed by the Commandant of several hundred sea-otter skins which her captain had purchased ashore. With this warning Captain Cleveland kept an eye out for squalls. He was able to obtain several valuable lots of furs, and made ready to go to sea without more delay. One more consignment of skins was to be delivered and the night before sailing the first officer and two men were sent ashore for them. They did not return and daylight showed the boat hauled out on the beach and the men from the brig in the hands of a squad of soldiers.

Captain Cleveland manned a boat with his armed sailors, pulled for the beach and promptly took his men away from their captors. As soon as the crew was on board, the Commandant's guard was unceremoniously disarmed, and with a fair wind the *Lelia Byrd* moved out to sea. "Before we got within gunshot of the fort," wrote Captain Cleveland in his journal, "they fired a shot ahead of us. We had previously loaded all our guns, and brought them all on the starboard side. As the tide was running in strong, we were not abreast the fort —which we passed within musket shot—till half an hour after receiving the first shot, all of which time they were playing away upon us; but as soon as we were abreast the fort we opened upon them, and in ten minutes silenced their battery and drove everybody out of it. They fired only two guns after we began, and only six of their shot counted, one of which went through between wind and water; the others cut the rigging and sails. As soon as we were clear we landed the guard, who had been in great tribulation lest we should carry them off."

Thirty years later Richard Henry Dana, author of Two

Years Before the Mast, found the story of this exploit still current in San Diego and the neighboring ports and missions. Shortly after the transfer of California to the United States, Commodore Biddle referred to the "Battle of San Diego" as giving Captain Cleveland a fair claim to the governorship of the territory which claim he had won in the *Lelia Byrd* long before Fremont's invasion.*

After some further adventures in search of trade along the Mexican coast the adventurers laid their course for the Sandwich Islands. They had purchased a horse on the coast and landed the beast on the island of Owyhee. There were only two European inhabitants on the Sandwich Islands at that time, John Young and Isaac Davis. Young came on board the brig and wanted to buy the mare as a present for King Tamaahmaah,

* "Another version is that of Rodriguez in his report to the Governor dated April 10th. About the fight the two narratives do not exactly agree. Rodriguez says that suspicious of contraband trade he made a round in the evening, surprised the Americans of one boat trading with Carlos Rosa at La Barranca, arrested them and went on to the Battery where he seized some goods left in payment for forty otter skins. Next morning when Cleveland came ashore to see what had become of the men one of the guards, Antonio Guillean —he was the husband of the famous old lady of San Gabriel, Eulalia Perez, who died in 1878 at a fabulous old age—came also, escaped, and hastened to warn the corporal in command of the battery that the Americans were going to sail without landing the guard. The corporal made ready his guns, and when the *Lelia Byrd* started, raised his flag, fired a blank cartridge and then a shot across her bows as Cleveland says. Then another shot was fired which struck the hull but did no damage. This may have been the effective shot.

"Thereupon Sergt. Arce shouted not to fire as they would be put ashore and the firing ceased. But when the vessel came opposite the fort on her way out she reopened the fire. The battery followed suit and did some damage, but stopped firing as soon as the vessel did, no harm being done to the fort or its defenders. It is, of course, impossible to reconcile these discrepancies. Rodriguez, an able and honorable man engaged in the performance of his duty, and making a clear straightforward report is prima facie entitled to credence against a disappointed and baffled smuggler.

"Cleveland ridiculed Rodriguez for his exceeding vanity, his absurd display of a little brief authority, and the characteristic pomp with which this arrant coxcomb performed his duties. I cannot deny that Don Manuel may have been somewhat pompous in manner, but the head and front of his offending in the eye of the Yankees was his interference with their schemes of contraband trade." (From The History of California, by Herbert Howe Bancroft. Vol II, page 11.)

but when his *blasé* Majesty saw the animal cantering up and down the beach he expressed little curiosity or interest, although this was the first animal larger than a pig ever seen by the natives of the Sandwich Islands. The king's subjects were wildly excited, however, and when one of the sailors mounted the mare and tore up and down the beach, the spectators were much concerned for the rider's safety, "and rent the air with shouts of admiration."

From the Sandwich Islands the *Lelia Byrd* was carried to China, arriving off Canton on the 29th of August, 1803. Here the cargo of sea-otter skins was sold, and the two captains, Shaler and Cleveland, parted company for the time. Shaler loaded the brig for a return voyage to the California coast and Richard Cleveland took passage around the Cape of Good Hope, homeward for Boston.

At the age of thirty years this Salem mariner returned to his kinfolk and friends after an absence of seven and a half years at sea. He had left home a lad of twenty-three with two thousand dollars as his total capital. He had been twice around the world, had accomplished three most extraordinary voyages in tiny craft, from Europe to the Cape of Good Hope, from India to the Isle of France and from China to the Northwest coast of America. He had fought and beaten mutineers and Spanish gunners by force of arms, his invincible pluck and tenacity had won him victories over Governors and Viceroys from Africa to the Mexican coast, he had succeeded in a dozen hazardous undertakings where a hundred men had failed, and at thirty years of age he had lived a score of ordinary lives. He had increased his slender capital to seventy thousand dollars by the cleanest and most admirable exertions, and as fortunes were counted a hundred years ago, he was a rich man.

The achievements of modern so-called "Captains of Industry," who amass millions in wresting, by methods of legalized

piracy, the riches that other men have earned, raise a prodigious clamor of comment, admiring and otherwise. But, somehow, such an American as Richard Cleveland seems to be a far more worthy type for admiration, and his deeds loom in pleasing contrast with those of a railroad wrecker or stock juggler, even though a fortune of seventy thousand dollars is a bagatelle in the eyes of the twentieth century.

Captain Cleveland believed that his affairs were so prosperously shaped that he could retire from the sea. He built him a home in Lancaster, Mass., where with his wife and brother, his well-stored mind and simple tastes enjoyed the tranquil life of a New England village. But much of his fortune was afloat or invested in foreign shipping markets, and misfortune overtook his ventures one after the other. Three years after his home-coming he was obliged to go to sea again to win a new treasure in partnership with his old friend, Nathaniel Shaler. For almost fifteen years longer he voyaged from one quarter of the globe to the other, winning large profits only to risk them in more alluring undertakings, always turning a resolute and undaunted front to whatever odds overtook him. In his elder years, after a series of cruel maritime reverses, he wrote as a summary:

"On making an estimate of my losses for the twenty years between 1800 and 1820, I find their aggregate amount to exceed $200,000, though I never possessed at any one time a sum to exceed $80,000. Under such losses I have been supported by the consoling reflection that they had been exclusively my own, and that it is not in the power of any individual to say, with truth, that I have ever injured him to the amount of a dollar. With a small annual sum from the Neapolitan indemnity I have been able to support myself till this was on the point of ceasing by the cancelling of that debt, when I was so fortunate as to obtain an office in the Boston Custom House, the duties of

which I hope to perform faithfully and in peace during the few remaining years or months or days which may be allotted to me on earth."

From an obituary notice in the *Boston Courier* of December 8, 1860, this tribute to the memory of Richard Cleveland is quoted, because it was written by one who knew him:

"While in the planning of commercial enterprises he showed rare inventive qualities, and in the execution of them wonderful energy and perseverance, he was somewhat deficient in those humbler qualities which enable men to keep and manage what they have earned. . . . But this reverse of fortune served to bring out more and more the beauty of Captain Cleveland's character, and to give him new claims to the affection and esteem of his friends. It was gently, patiently, heroically borne; never a word of complaint was heard from his lips, never a bitter arraignment of the ways of Providence, never an envious fling at the prosperity of others. And the wise, kind, cheerful old man was happy to the end."

Thus lived and died an American sailor of the olden-time, a brave and knightly man of an heroic age in his country's history.

# CHAPTER XVI

## THE PRIVATEERS OF 1812

THE War of 1812 was a sailors' war, fought by the United States for "Free Trade and Sailors' Rights." Americans of this century cannot realize the bitterness of feeling against England which was at white heat in all the Atlantic seacoastwise towns during a period of forty years before the second war waged by the young republic against the mother country. To the men of New England, in the words of Josiah Quincy, the land was "only a shelter from the storm, a perch on which they build their eyrie and hide their mate and their young, while they skim the surface, or hunt in the deep." In 1806 and 1807, according to the files of the State Department, six thousand American seamen were virtual captives in British war vessels. "The detection of an attempt to notify an American Consul of the presence of Americans on board an English ship was sure to be followed by a brutal flogging," writes the historian McMaster.

President Jefferson shrank from war and sought a retaliatory compromise in the Embargo of 1808 which forbade the departure of an American merchant vessel for any foreign port. This measure which paralyzed American trade, was so fiercely opposed in New England that an insurrection was feared, and the ports were filled with dismantled ships, empty warehouses, deserted wharves and starving seamen. When war came, it was welcomed by forty thousand native American merchant seamen who, eager for revenge for the wrongs they had suffered, were ready to crowd the ships of the navy and overflow into the fleets of privateers that hurried from every deep-water port.

England's high-handed claims to right of search and impressment and the continual menace from French and Spanish marauders had developed a much faster and more powerful class of merchant vessels than had been armed for service in the Revolution. During the war Salem placed in commission forty privateers of which more than half had been built in her own yards. Of these the most famous and successful was the ship *America*, whose audacious cruising ground was from the English Channel to the Canary Islands. The art of building fast and beautiful ships had been so far perfected a hundred years ago that Salem vessels were crossing the Atlantic in twelve and thirteen days for record passages, performances which were not surpassed by the famous clipper-packets of half a century later. The *America*, as shown in the interesting data collected by B. B. Crowninshield, although built in 1803, was faster with the wind on her quarter, than such crack racing machines as the *Vigilant*, *Defender* and *Columbia*. This noble privateer made a speed record of thirteen knots, with all her stores, guns, fittings, boats and bulwarks aboard, which is only one knot behind the record of the *Defender*, in short spurts, and when stripped in racing trim. The *America* frequently averaged better than ten knots for twelve hours on end, which matches the best day's run of the *Vigilant* in her run to Scotland in the summer of 1894. This privateer, which carried a crew of one hundred and fifty men and twenty-two guns was no longer than a modern cup defender.

This splendid fabric of the seas was the fastest Yankee ship afloat during the War of 1812, and her speed and the admirable seamanship displayed by her commanders enabled her to cruise in the English Channel for weeks at a time, to run away from British frigates which chased her home and back again, and to destroy at least two million dollars worth of English shipping.

Michael Scott, in "Tom Cringle's Log" described such a vessel as the *America* in the following passage dealing with the fate of a captured Yankee privateer at the hands of British masters:

"When I had last seen her she was the most beautiful little craft, both in hull and rigging, that ever delighted the eyes of a sailor; but the dock-yard riggers and carpenters had fairly bedeviled her—at least so far as appearances went. First they replaced the light rail on her gunwale by heavy, solid bulwarks four feet high, surmounted by hammock nettings at least another foot; so that the symmetrical little vessel, that formerly floated on the foam light as a sea gull, now looked like a clumsy, dish-shaped Dutch dogger. Her long slender wands of masts, which used to swing about as if there were neither shrouds nor stays to support them, were now as taut and stiff as church steeples, with four heavy shrouds on a side, and stays, and backstays, and the devil knows what all."

The *America* was built for the merchant service and her career before the war was not lacking in picturesque flavor. She was the pride of the great shipping family of Crowninshield, built by Retire Becket of Salem, under the eye of Captain George Crowninshield, Jr. With a crew of thirty-five men and ten guns she sailed on her first voyage, to the Dutch East Indies, in the summer of 1804, commanded by Captain Benjamin Crowninshield, Jr. Touching at the Isle of Bourbon in the Indian Ocean, it was learned that a cargo of coffee might be obtained at Mocha in the Red Sea. The *America* shifted her course and proceeded to Mocha, where she dropped anchor only seven years after the *Recovery* had first shown the stars and stripes in that port. Having taken on coffee, goat skins, gum arabic, and sienna, the ship went to Aden carrying as a passenger Mr. Pringle, the English consul. A few days later Captain Crowninshield was informed that Mr. Pringle had taken passage for England from Aden in

the ship *Alert*, which had been captured by Arabs, the captain and fifteen men murdered and the vessel carried off to India.

Meanwhile a rumor had reached Salem that the *America*, instead of obeying orders and going to Sumatra had veered away to Mocha after coffee. The owners had implicitly enjoined Captain Crowninshield after this imploring fashion:

"Now you've broken orders so often, see *for once* if you can't mind them."

When the ship was sighted off Salem harbor, the owners and some of their friends hastily put off in a small boat, wholly in the dark as to where their skipper had been and what he had fetched home, and not at all easy in their minds. If he had secured coffee, then they stood to win a small fortune, but if the cargo was pepper, which they had ordered him to get, well, the bottom had dropped out of the pepper market a short time before and the prospect was not so pleasing. It was a sea lottery of the kind that lent excitement to the return of most Salem ventures beyond the seas. As the owners neared the ship they began to sniff the wind. They thought they could smell coffee, but the old salt at the tiller suggested that the fragrant odor might be blown from a fresh pot of the beverage in the galley, and hopes fell below par. As soon as they were within fair hailing distance Captain Benjamin Crowninshield, one of the owners, shouted through a speaking trumpet, "What's your cargo?"

"Pep-p-er-r," came the doleful response from the skipper on the quarter deck.

"You're a liar, blast your eye, I smell coffee," roared back the agitated owner through his triumpet.

The Captain had had his little joke, and he was effusively forgiven, for he had brought back a cargo that harvested a clean profit of one hundred thousand dollars when sold in Holland.

As soon as war was declared the owners of the *America* hastened the task of fitting her out as a privateer. Her upper

deck was removed, and her sides filled in with stout oak timber between the planking and ceiling. Longer yards and royal masts gave her an immense spread of sail, and, square-rigged on her three masts she was a stately cloud of canvas when under full sail. Her guns were eighteen long nine-pounders, two six-pounders, two eighteen-pound carronades, and for small arms, forty muskets, four blunderbusses, fifty-five pistols, seventy-three cutlasses, ten top muskets, thirty-six tomahawks or boarding axes, and thirty-nine boarding pikes.

Her crew of one hundred and fifty men comprised a commander, three lieutenants, sailing master, three mates, surgeon, purser, captain of marines, gunner, gunner's mate, carpenter, carpenter's mate, steward, steward's mate, seven prize masters, armorer, drummer, fifer, three quartermasters, and one hundred and twenty-two seamen. This was the organization of a man-of-war of her time, and discipline was maintained as smartly as in the navy. Flogging was the penalty for offenses among the seamen, as shown by the record of a court martial on one of her cruises. A seaman had stolen a pair of shoes from a marine, for which he was sentenced to a dozen lashes. A poet of the privateer's gun deck described this event at some length, including these pithy lines:

"The Boatsw'n pipes all hands to muster,
No time for whining, plea or bluster,
The Judge announces the just sentence
And many stripes produce repentance;

"For the low cur, who'd meanly cozen
A poor Marine, must take his 'dozen.'"

On her first cruise the *America* was commanded by Captain Joseph Ropes, son of that Revolutionary privateersman, Captain David Ropes, who was killed in a bloody action aboard the *Jack*, off Halifax. Joseph Ropes was also a kinsman of Na-

thaniel Hawthorne, and of Nathaniel Bowditch, the two sons of Salem whose fame is world-wide. This captain of the *America* had sailed in her as a merchantman to the Mediterranean, and it is related that he made so favorable an impression upon the Sultan of Turkey that the potentate wished to negotiate through him a commercial treaty with the United States.

Tradition says that the only thing in the world Captain Ropes feared was reproof from his mother. She hated the sea because the boy's father had lost his life upon it, and young Joseph ran away on his first voyage to the West Indies when he was little past the spankable age. He took care to send her as a peace offering a barrel of molasses before he dared return home and face her sorrowing indignation. Captain Ropes made only one cruise in the *America*, after which he retired from the sea. He captured six prizes on the Atlantic, valued at $158,000, all of them merchantmen which could make no resistance to the heavy battery of the privateer.

Her second cruise was in command of Captain John Kehew, who had been a first lieutenant under Captain Ropes. The *America* was at sea four months and took ten vessels without notable incident. The third, fourth and fifth cruises of the privateer were entrusted to Captain James Chever, Jr., who won a name for himself as one of the ablest and most daring sailors of the war. He had been in the *America* from her first voyage to Mocha, when he was an infant of twelve years, acting as cabin boy. He came of a sterling fighting and seafaring stock. His father, Captain James Chever, was a lieutenant of the first *Grand Turk*, privateer during the Revolution, which ship, among other notable achievements, captured a large cargo of military supplies intended for Cornwallis. These stores were delivered to Washington and were a great assistance in the siege of Yorktown. The son rose to be a master of merchant vessel before he was twenty, and when he was given command of the *America*

Captain James W. Chever, commander of the privateer *America*

The privateer *America* under full sail

privateer in 1813, he was twenty-two years old, with one hundred and fifty men to take his orders and one of the finest and fastest ships afloat to win him fame and fortune.

From the log of his first cruise in the *America* the following extracts are chosen, as showing the daily life and business aboard a Yankee privateer a century ago:

"Dec. 14 (1813) Latter part, strong breezes and clear weather. At 11 A.M. saw a sail bearing E. by N. Called all hands and made sail in chase; and sent up Top Gallant yards. At 3 P.M. coming up with our chase very fast. He hoisted English colors and hauled up his courses. At half past 3 P.M. we hauled down our English colors; gave him a gun; and hoisted American colors. Passed within pistol shot of him, to windward, firing continually; exchanged three broadsides; in a few minutes afterward we past round his bow and gave him a raking fire. Our guns under water. There being a great sea and our decks full of water, and perceiving him to be a light transport of about six hundred tons, mounting 28 or 30 guns and full of men, we concluded if we took him we should not reap any advantage as he could not be of much value; therefore, thought it prudent to leave him. During the action received a number of shot, one of which cut away part of the maintopsail yard. The topsail being double reefed the shot went through both reefs; another shot went through our fore topsail; another cut away one of our fore-shrouds. John McIntire, a marine, while in the act of loading his musket, was shot through the left breast and expired instantly. From 4 to 6 P.M. employed sending down the main topsail and yard and getting up another. At half past six sent up the main topsail; while bending it lost a man out of the main top-mast rigging by the name of Ebenezer Osgood. It being very dark and a long sea, thought it imprudent to get the boat out. At 8 set the maintopsail close reefed. Close reefed the fore topsail and took in the mizzen topsail and

mainsail; at 9 took in the foresail; at 10 took in the fore topsail; at 11 took in the maintopsail and mizzen staysail and lay to under the fore and main staysail. Strong gales and cloudy weather. At ½ past 1 A.M. sent down the top-gallant yards. At 3 set the mizzen staysail. At 7 set the fore and mizzen topsails. A gun bursted."

"Dec. 25. Commences with light breezes and pleasant weather. At 2 P.M. took in the staysails and jib. At 3 all hands to quarters; exercise the guns. At 4 let two reefs out of the topsails. At half past four hands aft while the carpenter repaired the copper on the cutwater."

"Jan. 18th. At 1 P.M. coming up with our chase very fast found him to be a schooner. At 4 P.M. gave him a gun, and he hove to and hoisted English colors. Boarded him and found him to be the English schooner *Martha*, Wm. Williams, master, from Waterford, bound for Cadiz. Cargo dry goods, butter, bacon, Beef, etc. Put on board Wm. C. Hooper as prize master, with six men and ordered her for America. Took Mr. Wilson, mate, and three men. Left no one on board of her except the captain. Sent on board schooner 150 pounds bread, 10 do. chocolate, 4 gallons rum, 110 gallons water. Received from her five firkins butter. At 6 P.M. parted from her. At 10 hauled up the mainsail."

In a way, this capturing small merchant vessels, the loss of which spelled beggary for their masters, seemed a cruel and unnecessary part of war between nations. It had its stern use however, in crippling England's commercial strength, and in employing her navy to protect her trading fleets. The *America* swooped among these deep-laden craft like a hawk in a dove cote, snatching them from convoys, or picking them up in the English Channel almost within sight of their own shores. Her logs are filled with such entries as these:

"Jan. 23. He proved to be the British ship *Diana*, George

W. Carlton, master, from London bound for Madeira, cargo, deals. From 2 to 6 P.M. boats employed in taking our articles from the ship as the captain contemplated burning her. During the afternoon received on board all the *Diana's* company consisting of 15 in number and one passenger, likewise a quantity of duck, rigging, etc. At 3 P.M. after taking all necessary things out of the *Diana*, set fire to her."

"Jan. 26th. At 2 P.M. saw a sail bearing N.N.W.; called all hands to make sail in chase. At 3 sent up Royal masts and yards; and set all necessary sail. At 8 came up with the chase; it proved to be the British brig *Sovereign* from Cork bound for Liverpool, John Brown commander. Took on board the prisoners and put on board Mr. Hall, prize master with six men and ordered her to America. Her cargo consisted of coals, crates, butter, etc."

"Jan. 27th. A number of our men on board the *Sovereign* fitting a new foremast and doing other necessary work. At 4 P. M. saw a sail on the lee bow. Made a signal for our boats and all hands to repair on board. Instantly got in the boats and made all necessary sail in chase. At 5 nearing the chase very fast. At half past 9 lighted our side lanterns and called all hands to quarters. At 10 within gunshot of him; Fired and brought him to. Got out the gig and brought the captain on board with his papers. She proved to be the British ship *Falcon*, Atkinson, master, from Liverpool *via* Lisbon, bound to the Canaries, with a very valuable cargo of merchandise. At 11 took on board the prisoners. Put on board Mr. Cleaves as prize master with 12 hands."

"Jan. 28. At 8 A.M. saw a sail in the lee bow. A signal was made for the boat and all hands to repair on board. Made sail in chase. At 4 P.M. discovered him to be a brig. At half past 9 gave him a gun; he not regarding it soon after gave him another and he rounded to. Got out the boat and boarded him.

The captain came on board with his papers. She proved to be the British brig *Ann* of London, Appleton, master, from Oporto bound to Bayhei in ballast; not being of much value, permitted him to pass, after putting all our prisoners on board of him, being forty-six in number including the brig's crew, and directed him to land them in Teneriffe and there to report to the proper officer. At 4 P.M. got all the prisoners on board and ordered him to make sail."

Prize after prize was thus entered in the log, for the *America* overhauled everything she sighted and made chase after, and managed to keep in the track of the richest trade bound to and from England, nor could British frigates find and drive her off her station. Other entries for this third cruise include the following:

"Feb. 19th. Coming up with our chase very fast. At ½ past 3 took in studding sails and Royals. At 4 fired a gun and brought him to and boarded him. He proved to be the British brig *Sisters* from Malaga, cargo wine and fruit, prize to the American privateer, *Young Wasp* of Philadelphia. At 5 parted with him."

"Feb. 20th. All hands to quarters and exercise the great guns, Boarders, etc. Started two Hogsheads of salt water forward to trim ship by the stern."

"Feb. 24th. At 9 A.M. got out the launch to scrub the bottom. All hands employed in setting up and tarring down the rigging. At 7 P.M. put all prisoners in Irons for bad Conduct."

"March 1. At 9 A.M. saw a sail bearing about S.W. Hauled up for him and set the mainsail, jib and mizzen. At 10 perceived the sail to be a ship of war, apparently a frigate; wore ship to the N.N.W. Set top gallant sails, stay sails and top mast studding sails, and sent up the Royal yards. At ½ past 11 fired a lee gun and hoisted our colors.

"March 2. Lost sight of the ship astern at 1 P.M.

"March 6. At ½ past 2 all hands to quarters for exercise. Got out the boat and carried an empty water cask from the ship, about 60 yards to fire at. Blew off one Broadside. All the shots went very near. At 4 went in swimming."

On this cruise the *America* took an even dozen prizes. Touching at Portsmouth, N. H., to gather her crew, which had been dangerously reduced by manning prizes, the privateer refitted and sailed on her fourth cruise, Oct. 31st, 1814. This was her only unlucky voyage. She ran into a submerged derelict at sea, and was so badly damaged that Captain Chever returned to Salem for repairs before any capture had been made. Departure was made from Salem for the fifth and last cruise on Nov. 25, 1814. "On this cruise," writes B. B. Crowninshield in an interesting summary of the *America's* log, "the sea seemed to be full of English men-of-war and much of the *America's* time was taken up in dogging and running away from frigates, and the crew no doubt realized that danger of capture to which they were continually exposed; at all events the log on Jan 8th and on each succeeding Sunday records that 'all hands were called to prayers,' although prayers were in no way allowed to interfere with the management of the ship or the furtherance of the purpose for which she was fitted out. They attended prayers at intervals before, and had returned thanks for a Merciful Providence Dec. 11."

On Feb. 27, the *America* fell in with the English packet, *Princess Elizabeth*, of 188 tons, armed with six nine-pound carronades, two long brass nine-pounders, and manned by thirty-two men. She proved to be a rarely plucky foeman, and during the hot engagement that followed, Captain Chever's crew exhibited a skill in gunnery comparable with that of the tars of the *Constitution* and American frigates. Captain Chever describes the action in these words:

"At half past 4 P.M. saw a sail on our weather bow, made all sail in chase of her. At ½ past six P.M. lost sight of the above ship. At 9 P.M. wore ship to the S. and E., judging that after he lost sight of us he would keep his former course to the Eastward. Hauled up our main course. At 6 A.M. saw the above ship to the west. Wore ship and stood after him. At 8 A.M. still in chase of the above ship, coming up with him very fast. He hauled down his signals, fired a gun and hoisted an English Ensign and Pennant. At the same time we fired a gun and hoisted English colors. At 9 A.M. nearly on his lee quarter, hauled down English and hoisted American colors. He immediately bore away before the wind and gave us a broadside which we returned by giving him another, when the action became general. At 12 minutes past nine, seeing his colors hanging overboard, concluded that he had struck and ceased firing, but in two minutes, seeing his fire, commenced firing again. At 18 minutes past 9 he surrendered, we receiving no loss on board the *America* neither in men, rigging, sails, or hull.

"At ½ past nine boarded him; he proved to be H. B. M. Ship Packet *Princess Elizabeth*, John Forresdale commander, mounting 8 carriage guns and 32 men, from Rio Janeiro bound to Falmouth. Her loss was 2 killed and 13 wounded; among the latter was the Capt. by a grape shot through the thigh. The Packet was very much cut to pieces. She had 8 shot holes between wind and water, 3 nine-pound shot in her mainmast, just above deck, one in her mizzen mast, and one in her main topmast, and one in her fore topmast, with his braces, bowlines and part of his shrouds and stays cut away, and about 700 shot holes thro' his sails besides a large number through his bulwarks. On our approaching them they thought us to be some cunning ship with 12 or 14 guns and the rest Quakers. But they found their mistake so as to convince them that Quakers were not silent at all times. Took out her guns, muskets,

pistols, cutlasses, powder and shot on board the *America*, and gave her up to her original crew, to proceed on to Falmouth, after putting on board 6 prisoners, and a quantity of bread, as they had on board only 15 pounds for 25 men. Sent our Doctor on board to dress the wounded."

After taking thirteen prizes on this cruise the *America* returned to Salem and the last entry in her log reads:

"April 18. (1814.) At 4 P.M. came to with the best bower in seven fathoms and handed all sails and fired a salute of forty guns. People all discharged to go on shore. So ends the ship *America's* last cruise."

During her career as a privateer she had sent safely into port twenty-seven British vessels, but her captures much exceeded this number. Six of her prizes were retaken on their way to America and many more were destroyed at sea. Her officers and crew divided more than one half million dollars in prize money. More than this, with an American navy so small that it could not hope to take the offensive against England's mighty sea power, the *America* had played her part well in crippling that maritime commerce which was the chief source of English greatness. This beautiful ship never went to sea again. For reasons unknown and inexplicable at the present time, she was allowed to lay dismantled alongside Crowninshield's wharf in Salem until 1831, when she was sold at auction and broken up. The *Essex Register* of June 16th of that year contains this melancholy obituary in its advertising columns:

"Hull, etc. of Ship *America*
AT AUCTION
On Thursday next at 10 o'clock,
(Necessarily postponed from Thursday)
Will be sold by auction at the Crowninshield Wharf,
The Hull of the Privateer Ship *America*,

very heavily copper-fastened, and worthy attention for breaking up.
Also—about 1000 pounds of Powder, consisting principally of cannon and musket cartridges.
A quantity of old Iron, Rigging, old Canvas, Blocks Spars,—a complete set of Sweeps with a variety of other articles.
The sale will commence with the materials, June 16.
GEORGE NICHOLS, Auct'r."

Long after the war Captain Chever, master of a merchant vessel, became acquainted in the harbor of Valparaiso with Sir James Thompson, captain of the British frigate *Dublin*. This man-of-war had been fitted out with the special object of capturing the *America* in 1813. While the two captains chatted together in cordial friendliness, Sir James Thompson fell to telling stories of his service afloat in chase of the famous Yankee privateer. "I was almost within gun-shot of her once, just as night was coming on," said he, "but by daylight she had outsailed the *Dublin* so devilish fast that she was no more than a speck on the horizon. And by the way, I wonder if you know who it was commanded the *America* on that cruise?" Captain Chever was glad to answer such an absurdly easy question as this, and his former foeman enjoyed the singular coincidence of this amicable meeting.

Even during the years of conflict the Yankee privateersman had more sympathy for than hatred of the prisoners whose ships they took or destroyed. Far more than the patriot landsman they could feel for these hapless victims of warfare on the seas, for they had suffered similar misfortunes at the hands of Englishmen, year after year. In an era of nominal peace the British navy alone had confiscated more American vessels than

were captured from under the English flag by Yankee privateers in the War of 1812. And if the merciless ravages of such fleet sea hawks as the *America* beggared many a British skipper whose fate in no way touched the issue of the war, it should be remembered, on the other hand, that in every American seaport there were broken captains and ruined homes whose irremediable disasters had been wrought by British authority.

In order to gain a more intimate realization of the spirit of those times, it may be worth while to review a typical incident which befell Captain Richard Cleveland of Salem. In 1806 he was in command of the ship *Telemaco* in which he had staked all his cash and credit, together with the fortune of his friend and partner, Nathaniel Shaler. Their investment in ship and cargo amounted to more than fifty thousand dollars won after years of maritime risk and adventure in every sea of the globe.* He sailed from Rio Janeiro for Havana, and said of the prospects of this voyage in a letter to his wife:

"With what a series of misfortunes have I not been assailed for the past three years, and with what confidence can I now expect to escape the pirates in the West Indies? I expect to meet the British ships of war, but do not fear them, as my business is regular, and such as will bear the nicest scrutiny by those who act uprightly; but should I meet with any of those privateers the consequence may be serious as they respect the property of no one."

In his published narrative Captain Cleveland made this additional comment:

"But these were precarious times for neutrals, when the two great belligerents (England and France) agreed in nothing else than plundering them . . . On the presumption, however, that such neutral commerce as did not, even in a remote degree, prejudice the interests of the belligerents would be unmolested,

*See Chapter XVIII.

I felt that I had little else than sea-risk to guard against, and was therefore free from anxiety on the subject of insurance."

Near the equator Captain Chever was overhauled by a British frigate, and later by a sloop of war, the commanders of both of which vessels satisfied themselves of the legality of his voyage and very civilly permitted him to go on his way. Convinced that he was in no danger from this quarter, Captain Cleveland expected a safe arrival in Havana. Near Martinique he hove in sight of a British fleet, of which Admiral Cochrane was in command on board the *Ramillies* seventy-four. The American shipmaster was summoned on board the flagship, his papers carefully examined by the captain, and no cause found for his detention. He was sent aboard his ship, and made sail on his course with a happy heart. Scarcely was he under way when Admiral Cochrane signalled him to heave to again, and without deigning to question him or look at his papers ordered the ship seized and taken to the Island of Tortola for condemnation proceedings. These formalities were a farce, the *Telemaco* was confiscated with her cargo and after fruitless efforts to obtain a fair hearing, Captain Cleveland wrote:

"I am now on the point of embarking for home, after being completely stripped of the fruits of many years hard toil . . . To have practised the self-denial incident to leaving my family for so long a time; to have succeeded in reaching Rio Janeiro after being dismasted and suffering all the toils and anxieties of a voyage of forty-three days in that crippled condition; to have surmounted the numerous obstacles and risks attendant on the peculiarity of the transactions in port; to have accomplished the business of lading and despatching the vessels in defiance of great obstacles, and to perceive the fortune almost within my grasp which would secure me ease and independence for the remainder of my life, and then, by the irresistable means of brute force, to see the whole swept off, and myself and family

thereby reduced in a moment from affluence to poverty, must be admitted as a calamity of no ordinary magnitude. . . . After the villainy I have seen practised, at Tortola, by men whose power and riches not only give them a currency among the most respectable, but make their society even courted, I blush for the baseness of mankind and almost lament that I am one of the same species."

In the list of Salem privateers of 1812, one finds that few of them were in the same class with the splendid and formidable *America*. Indeed, some were as audaciously equipped, manned and sailed as the little craft which put to sea in the Revolution. For example, among the forty-odd private armed craft hailing from Salem during the latter war, there were such absurd cock-sparrows as:

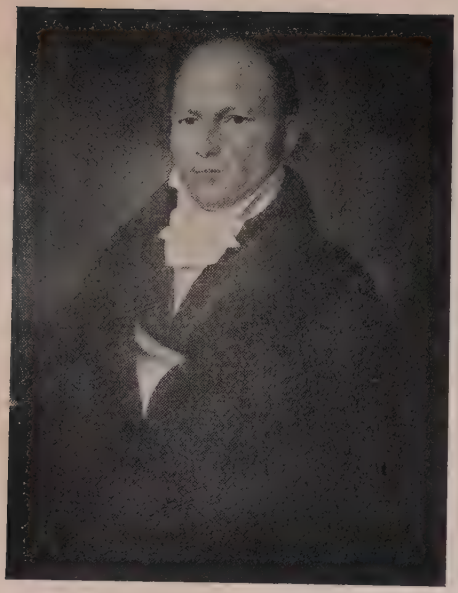
| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *The Active* | 20 tons | 2 guns (4 lbs.) | 25 men |
| *Black Vomit* (boat) | 5 " | muskets | 16 " |
| *Castigator* (launch) | 10 " | 1 6 lb. carronade | 20 " |
| *Fame* | 30 " | 2 6 lb. " | 30 " |
| *Orion* (boat) | 5 " | muskets | 20 " |
| *Phœnix* | 20 " | 1 6 lb. " | 25 " |
| *Terrible* (boat) | 5 " | muskets | 16 " |

The schooner *Helen* was a merchant vessel loaned by her owners to a crew of volunteers for the special purpose of capturing the *Liverpool Packet*, a venturesome English privateer which for several months had made herself the terror of all vessels entering Massachusetts Bay. She clung to her cruising ground off Cape Cod and evaded the privateers sent in search of her. At last the seamen of Salem determined to clip her wings, and the notion was most enthusiastically received. The *Helen* was fitted out and seventy volunteers put on board in the remarkably brief time of four hours. Captains Upton and Tibbetts, the leaders of the expedition, organized a parade through the Salem streets, led by a flag bearer, a fifer and

drummer, and had not made the circuit of the town before the full crew was enlisted. Four six-pounders were borrowed from the privateer *John*, and before nightfall of the same day the *Helen* was heading for sea. Some of her crew leaped aboard as she was leaving the wharf and signed articles while the schooner was working down the harbor. They failed to overhaul the *Liverpool Packet* which had sailed for Halifax to refit, but their spirit was most praiseworthy. The English privateer was captured later by another Yankee vessel.

The *Grand Turk* was one of the finest privateers of the war, an East India ship of 310 tons, fitted out with eighteen guns and one hundred and fifty men. Her commanders were Holten J. Breed and Nathan Green who made brilliantly successful cruises. After one cruise of one hundred and three days she returned to Salem with only forty-four of her crew on board, the remainder having been put into prizes of which she had captured eight, one of them with a cargo invoiced at a hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Her log describes several astonishing escapes from British cruisers in which she showed a nimble pair of heels that won her the name of being one of the fastest armed ships afloat. During her last cruise, Captain Nathan Green made the following entries:

"Friday, March 10 (1815), at daylight the man at the masthead descried a sail in the eastern quarter. Called all hands immediately and made sail in chase. Soon after saw another sail on the weather bow. Still in pursuit of the chase and approaching her fast. At 6:30 passed very near the second sail, which was a Portuguese schooner standing W.S.W. At 7:00 saw third sail three points on our lee bow, the chase a ship. At 8:00 discovered the third to be a large ship by the wind to the north and westward. At 10:00 being ¾ of a mile to windward discovered the chase to be a frigate, endeavoring to decoy us. Tacked ship and she immediately tacked and made all



Capt. Holten J. Breed, commander of the privateer *Grand Turk*

The privateer *Grand Turk*

sail in pursuit of us. Soon perceived we had the superiority of sailing, displayed the American flag and fired a shot in defiance. At 11:00 the wind hauled suddenly to the westward. The frigate received a favorable breeze which caused her to lay across and nearing us fast. At 11:30, the frigate within gunshot, got out our sweeps and made considerable progress, although calm and a short head sea. Frigate commenced firing, got out her boats and attempted to tack four different times but did not succeed. Hoisted our colors and gave her a number of shot. A ship to leeward, a frigate also. At noon swept our brig round with her head to the northward, and having the wind more favorable, left the chaser considerably. The day ends with extreme sultry weather and both ships in pursuit of us.

"Saturday, March 11, at dark, frigates using every exertion to near us.

"Sunday, March 12, at 1:30 P.M. saw two sail two points on our lee bow, soon discovered them to be the two frigates still in pursuit of us and much favored by the breeze. At 5 P.M. light variable winds with us and the enemy still holding the breeze. Took to our sweeps. At dark the enemy's ships bore S.S.W.

"Monday, March 13, at 2 P.M. the enemy having been out of sight 4½ hours, concluded to get down the foretopmast and replace it with a new one. All hands busily employed. At 4 descried a second sail ahead standing for us. At 5:30 got the new foretopmast and top gallant mast in place, rigging secured, yards aloft and made sail in pursuit of the latter. At 7 came up and boarded her; she proved to be a Portuguese brig bound from Bahia to Le Grande with a cargo of salt. Finding ourselves discovered by the British cruisers, and being greatly encumbered with prisoners, concluded to release them and accordingly paroled five British prisoners and discharged ten

Spaniards and put them on board the brig after giving a necessary supply of provisions.

"Saturday, March 18, at 2 P.M., came up and spoke a Portuguese brig from Africa bound to Rio Janeiro with a cargo of slaves. Filled away in pursuit of a second sail in the N.W. At 4:30 she hoisted English colors and commenced firing her stern guns. At 5:20 took in the steering sails, at the same time she fired a broadside. We opened a fire from our larboard battery, and at 5:30 she struck her colors. Got out the boats and boarded her. She proved to be the British brig *Acorn* from Liverpool for Rio Janeiro, mounting fourteen cannon and having a cargo of dry goods. At 5:30 we received the first boat load of goods aboard. Employed all night in discharging her.

"Sunday, March 19, at daylight saw two frigates and a brig on the lee beam in chase of us. Took a very full boatload of goods on board, manned out the prize with Joseph Phippen and eleven men and ordered her for the United States. As the prize was in a good plight for sailing, I have great reason to think she escaped. One of the frigates pursued us for three-quarters of an hour, but finding that she had her old antagonist gave up the pursuit. Having on board one hundred and sixty-odd bales, boxes, cases and trunks of goods, which I conceive is very valuable, and the brigs copper and rigging being very much out of repair, and the water scant, concluded to return home with all possible dispatch. As another inducement I have information of a treaty of peace being signed at Ghent between the United States and Great Britain, and only remains to be ratified by the former.

"Wednesday, March 29, at 4 A.M. saw a sail to windward very near us, and tacked in pursuit of her. At 8:30 came up with and boarded her. She proved to be a Portuguese ship from Africa bound to Maranham with 474 slaves on board. Paroled and put on board eleven British prisoners.

"Saturday, April 15, boarded the American schooner *Commit* of and from Alexandria for Barbadoes with a cargo of flour. They gave us the joyful tidings of peace between America and England, which produced the greatest rejoicing throughout the ship's company.

"Saturday, April 29, 1815, at 7:30 A.M. saw Thatchers Island bearing N.W. At 8 saw Bakers Island bearing west. At 9:30 came to anchor in Salem harbor, cleared decks, and saluted the town. This ends the cruise of 118 days."

Captain Nathan Green was a modest man, and his log, if taken alone, would indicate that his escapes from British frigates were most matter of fact incidents. The fact is, however, that these events of his cruise were made notable by rarely brilliant feats of seamanship and calculated daring. The scene of action began off the coast of Pernambuco, in which port Captain Green had learned that eight English merchant vessels were making ready to sail. He took prize after prize in these waters, until the English assembled several cruisers for the express purpose of capturing the bold privateer. The frigates which chased him were part of this squadron, and he not only eluded their combined attempts, but continued to make captures almost in sight of the enemy. His log shows that the pursuit, in which both the *Grand Turk* and the frigate were towed by their boats, and sweeps manned for a night and a day was as thrilling and arduous a struggle as that famous escape of the *Constitution* from a powerful British squadron in the same war. The two ships were within firing distance of each other for hours on end, and after a second frigate joined in the hunt, the *Grand Turk* managed to keep her distance only by the most prodigious pluck and skill.

The records of the Salem Marine Society contain the following compact account of the most spectacular engagement of an illustrious fighting privateersman of Salem:

"Capt. Benjamin Upton commanded the private armed brig *Montgomery*, one hundred and sixty-five tons, armed with eighteen guns. While on a cruise off Surinam, December 5, 1812, at 3 P.M., made a sail standing northward, which proved to be a large English packet brig with troops. She hauled up her courses and stood toward the *Montgomery*, which was prepared to receive her at 7 P.M. After exchanging shots and wearing, the *Montgomery* ordered her to send a boat on board, which she refused to do. Then commenced a terrible conflict. The *Montgomery* delivered her broadside, which was returned, and continued till 8 o'clock, when her antagonist laid the *Montgomery* aboard on the starboard waist, his port anchor catching in after gun port, his spritsail yard and jib-boom sweeping over the waist guns. In this situation the *Montgomery* kept up a fire of musketry and such guns as could be brought to bear, which was returned with musketry by regular platoons of soldiers. In this way the fight continued for fifty minutes. The *Montgomery* finally filled her foretop-sail and parted from the enemy, breaking his anchor, making a hole in the *Montgomery's* deck, breaking five stanchions and staving ten feet of bulwark, with standing rigging much cut up. She hauled off for repairs, having four men killed and twelve wounded, among whom were Capt. Upton and Lieut. John Edwards of this society. It was thought prudent to get north into cooler weather, on account of the wounded. The enemy stood to the northward after a parting shot. On the *Montgomery's* deck were found three boarding pikes, one musket and two pots of combustible matter, intended to set fire to the *Montgomery*, and which succeeded, but was finally extinguished. This was one of the hardest contests of the war. The *Montgomery* was afterwards commanded by Capt. Jos. Strout, and captured by H. M. ship of the line, La Hoge, and taken to Halifax. When Capt. Strout with his son, who was with him, were going alongside of the ship in the

launch, another son, a prisoner on board, hailed the father and asked where mother was, which would have comprised the whole family."

By the end of the year 1813 the prizes captured by Salem privateers had been sold for a total amount of more than six hundred thousand dollars. Many of the finest old mansions of the Salem of to-day, great square-sided homes of noble and generous aspect, were built in the decade following the War of 1812, from prize money won by owners of privateers. While ship owners risked and equipped their vessels for profit in this stirring business of privateering, the spirit of the town is to be sought more in such incidents as that of Doctor Bentley's ride to Marblehead on a gun carriage. The famous Salem parson was in the middle of a sermon when Captain George Crowninshield appeared at a window at the old East Church, and engaged in an agitated but subdued conversation with Deacon James Brown, whose pew was nearest him. Doctor Bentley's sermon halted and he asked:

"Mr. Brown, is there any news?"

"The *Constitution* has put into Marblehead with two British cruisers after her, and is in danger of capture," was the startling reply.

"This is a time for action," shouted Doctor Bentley. "Let us go to do what we can to save the *Constitution*, and may God be with us, Amen."

At the head of his congregation the parson rushed down the aisle and hurried toward Marblehead. The alarm had spread through the town, and Captain Joseph Ropes had assembled the Sea Fencibles, a volunteer coast guard two hundred strong. Doctor Bentley was their chaplain, and his militant flock hoisted him on board the gun which they were dragging with them, and thus he rode in state to Marblehead. Meantime, however, Captain Joseph Perkins, keeper of the Baker Island

Light, had put off to the *Constitution* in a small boat, and offering his services as pilot, brought the frigate inside the harbor where she was safe from pursuit by the *Endymion* and the *Tenedos*.

The ill-fated duel between the *Chesapeake* and the *Shannon* was fought off Boston harbor, and was witnessed by thousands of people from Marblehead and Salem who crowded to the nearest headlands. They saw the *Chesapeake* strike to the British frigate after a most desperate combat in which Captain Lawrence was mortally hurt. The captured American ship was taken to Halifax by the *Shannon*. Soon the news reached Salem that the commander whose last words, "Don't give up the Ship," were to win him immortality in defeat, was dead in a British port, and the bronzed sea-dogs of the Salem Marine Society resolved to fetch his body home in a manner befitting his end. Capt. George Crowninshield obtained permission from the Government to sail with a flag of truce for Halifax, and he equipped the brig *Henry* for this sad and solemn mission. Her crew was picked from among the shipmasters of Salem, some of them privateering captains, every man of them a proven deep-water commander, and thus manned the brig sailed for Halifax. It was such a crew as never before or since took a vessel out of an American port. They brought back to Salem the body of Capt. James Lawrence and Lieut. Augustus Ludlow of the *Chesapeake*, and the brave old seaport saw their funeral column pass through its quiet and crowded streets. The pall-bearers bore names, some of which thrill American hearts to-day; Hull, Stuart, Bainbridge, Blakely, Creighton and Parker, all captains of the Navy. A Salem newspaper thus describes the ceremonies:

"The day was unclouded, as if no incident should be wanting to crown the mind with melancholy and woe—the wind blew from the same direction and the sea presented the same unruffled

surface as was exhibited to our anxious view when on the memorable first day of July, we saw the immortal Lawrence proudly conducting his ship to action. . . . The brig *Henry*, containing the precious relics, clad in sable, lay at anchor in the harbor. At half-past twelve o'clock they were placed in barges, and, preceded by a long procession of boats filled with seamen uniformed in blue jackets and trousers, with a blue ribbon on their hats bearing the motto of "Free Trade and Sailors' Rights," were rowed by minute-strokes to the end of India Wharf, where the bearers were ready to receive the honored dead. From the time the boats left the brig until the bodies were landed, the United States brig *Rattlesnake* and the brig *Henry* alternately fired minute guns.

"The immense concourse of citizens which covered the wharves, stores and house tops to view the boats, the profound silence which pervaded the atmosphere, broken only by the reverberations of the minute-guns, rendered this part of the solemnities peculiarly grand and impressive.

"Conspicuous in the procession and in the church were a large number of naval and military officers, also the Salem Marine and East India Marine Societies, wearing badges, with the Masonic and other organizations.

"On arriving at the Meeting house, the coffins were placed in the center of the church by the seamen who rowed them ashore, and who stood during the ceremony leaning upon them in an attitude of mourning. The church was decorated with cypress and evergreen, and the names of Lawrence and Ludlow appeared in gilded letters in front of the pulpit.

The remains of Lawrence rested in the Salem burying ground until 1849 when they were removed to New York, where in the churchyard of Old Trinity, his monument bears the line that can never die:

"Don't Give up the Ship."

# CHAPTER XVII

## THE TRAGEDY OF THE "*FRIENDSHIP*"

(1831)

THE first American vessel to load pepper on the coast of Sumatra was the Salem schooner *Rajah* in 1795, and the last ship under the stars and stripes to seek a cargo on that coast was the *Australia* of Salem in 1860. Between these years the trade with that far off island was chiefly in the hands of the merchants and shipmasters of Salem. When the United States frigate *Potomac* was ordered to the East Indies seventy-five years ago with instructions to prepare charts and sailing directions of the Sumatra coast to aid American mariners, her commander reported that "this duty has been much more ably performed than it could have been with our limited materials. For this important service our country is indebted to Captain Charles M. Endicott and Captain James D. Gillis of Salem, Massachusetts. The former, who was master of the *Friendship* when she was seized by the Malays at Quallah-Battoo has been trading on this coast for more than fifteen years, during which period he has, profitably for his country, filled up the delay incident to a pepper voyage, by a careful and reliable survey of the coast, of which no chart was previously extant that could be relied on."

Captain Endicott of the *Friendship* not only risked his vessel amid perils of stranding along these remote and uncharted shores, but also encountered the graver menaces involved in trading with savage and treacherous people who were continu-

ally on the alert to murder the crews and capture the ships of these dauntless American traders. Notwithstanding all of Captain Endicott's precautions and shrewdness born of long experience, he was at length overtaken by the fate which befell others of these pioneers in Malaysian waters. The story of the tragedy of the *Friendship* is typical of the adventures of the Salem shipmasters of the long ago, and Captain Endicott, like many of his fellow mariners, possessed the gift of writing such a narrative in a clean-cut, and vigorous fashion which makes it well worth while presenting in his own words. Perhaps because they told of things simply as they had known and seen and done them, without straining after literary effect, these old-fashioned sea captains of Salem were singularly capable writers, self-taught and educated as they were, jumping from school to the forecastle at twelve or fourteen years of age.

For the entertainment of his comrades and friends of Salem, Captain Endicott put pen to paper and told them what had happened to him and his ship on the coast of Sumatra in the year of 1831. Somewhat condensed, this virile chapter of salt-water history runs as follows:

"The ship *Friendship*, of this place, under my command, sailed from Salem for the west coast of Sumatra, with a crew of seventeen men, including officers and seamen, on the 26th of May, 1830. On the 22d September following we touched first at the port of Qualah Battoo (*i.e.*, in English, Rocky River), in Lat. 3.48 m. North. This place is inhabited by natives from the Pedir coast, on the north of the island (of Sumatra), as well as Acheenise, and is therefore governed jointly by a Pedir and an Acheenise Rajah. We remained here for the purposes of trade, until the 5th of November following, at which time, having obtained all the pepper of the old crop, and the new pepper not coming in until March or April, we left that port, and in prosecu-

tion of our voyage visited several others, and finally returned to Pulo Kio (*i.e.*, in English, Wood Island), about two miles from Qualah Battoo, the latter part of January, 1831, intending to remain there until the coming in of the pepper crop.

"One bright moonlight night, shortly after our arrival at this place, I was awakened by the watch informing me that a native boat was approaching the ship in a very stealthy manner, and under suspicious circumstances. I immediately repaired on deck, and saw the boat directly in our wake under the stern, the most obvious way to conceal herself from our observation, and gradually approaching us with the utmost caution, without the least noise or apparent propelling power, the oars being struck so lightly in the water that its surface was scarcely ruffled. Having watched their proceedings a few minutes, we became convinced it was a reconnoitering party, sent to ascertain how good a look-out was kept on board the ship, and intending to surprise us for no good purpose.

"We therefore hailed them in their own dialect, asking them where they came from, what they wanted, and why they were approaching the ship in such a tiger-like manner. We could see that all was instantly life and animation on board her, and after a few moments we received an answer that they were friends from Qualah Battoo, with a load of smuggled pepper, which they were desirous to dispose of to us. We, however, positively forbade them to advance any nearer the ship, or to come alongside; but, after considerable discussion, we at length gave our consent for them to come *abreast* the ship at a respectful distance, and we would send some of our own men on board to ascertain if their story was correct, and if there was nothing suspicious about her, on their giving up their side arms we would rig a whip upon the main yard, and in this way take on board their pepper, and allow one man to come on board ship to look after it.

# The Battle of Qualah Battoo.

It will be remembered that the ship Friendship, of Salem, while at Qualah Battoo, on the Island of Sumatra, in the Indian Ocean, was taken by the natives and all hands murdered. When the intelligence was received by the American Government, the U. S. Frigate Potomac, Capt. John Downes, was immediately ordered to that place to chastise them: which was effectually accomplished on the night of the 7th of February, 1832.—convincing them that the stars and stripes of Uncle Sam are not to be trampled upon, nor the lives of American tars sacrificed with impunity.

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The sun was retiring behind the high mountains,
The fate of our crew fell in our view;
The frigate *Potomac*.—John Downes our commander—
Rode proudly at anchor off Qualah Battoo.

The fair breeze blew mild, the night was serene,
"Our boat"—was the word, and our tackles were man'd;—
Six miles was the distance that now lay between,
Our fair lofty ship and the enemy's land.

Our boats were soon launch'd on the breast of the billows,
[illegible]
On deck we reposed when [illegible] our pillows,
And committed our cause with [illegible] to Heaven.

At the dead hour of night when all nature was silent,
The boatswain's shrill pipe call'd each seaman to his post;
Our hearts were all nerv'd with justice and manfully bent,
To attack and destroy that piratical host,

Who boarded the *Friendship* and murdered her crew,
Just twelve months before the memorable day
When Shubrick* led forth the Potomac so true,
To fight and to vanquish the hostile Malay.

Our boats were all ready and we were prepared
To fight or to die, for our cause it was just;
Our muskets were loaded, our cutlasses were bared,
To the strife or the storm, for in God was our trust.

When thus spake our brave and respected commander
"I charge you by all that is sacred below,
From the true paths of honor or virtue don't wander
If mercy's requested, then mercy bestow.

Never let it be said that the sons of Columbia,
Sheath their swords in the breast of female or child;
And may virtue and honor attend you this day—
Be ye death to the [illegible]

To revenge the sad wrongs which our friends and our nation,
So oft have sustained from those demons of hell;
Our work was commenced, and the bright conflagration
Left but few of our foes the sad story to tell.

Those forts they were strong, and like heroes they fought,
For mercy or quarters they never had shown;
And the blood of their victims forever they sought,
But the God of the Christians they never had known.

All around us [illegible] enemy [illegible]
[illegible] and shot were poured abroad;
But still on their forts we continued to play,
To conquer our object—Potomac's the word.

Exposed to their fire, the Potomac undaunted
Beneath their rude ramparts whose hands and brave,
Resolved that the stripes and the stars of Columbia
Ere long on their ramparts in triumph should wave.

Their flame soon ceas'd, and our brave pioneers
Their sprang a path and entered their gates;
We gave them a moment—gave them pretty cheers—
Then hoisted the flag that is worn by the States.

The white-flame of war now began to increase,
And warned us the hour of departure was near;
Our wounded and dead we collected in peace,
And armed with our pikes and our muskets a bier,

To convey them all weeping and pale from the shore,
To our ship that majestically rode on the wave;
To comfort the wounded—the dead to deplore,
And commit their remains to a watery grave.

The Potomac's [illegible] [illegible]
Fl[illegible] [illegible] the starry waves;
Columbia's [illegible] the stars and [illegible]
Shall be [illegible]

An old broadside, relating the incidents of the battle of Qualah Battoo

"All our own crew had, in the mean time, been mustered and armed, and a portion of them placed as sentinels on each side the gangway. In this manner we passed on board some fifty or sixty bags of pepper. We were afterwards informed by the second officer, that while this was going forward, the chief officer, who subsequently lost his life, was secretly scoffing at these precautions, attributing them to cowardice, and boasting he could clear the decks of a hundred such fellows with a single handspike. This boat, we ascertained, was sent by a young man named Po Qualah, the son of the Pedir Rajah, for the express purpose which we had suspected; the pepper having been put on board merely as an excuse in case they should be discovered. It was only a sort of parachute, let off to see from what quarter the wind blew, as a guide for their evil designs upon us.

"Ascertaining, however, by this artifice, that the ship was too vigilantly guarded, at least in the night, to be thus surprised, they set themselves at work to devise another plan to decoy us to Qualah Battoo, in which, I am sorry to say, they were more successful.

"A few days after this occurrence, a deputation was sent to invite us to Qualah Battoo, representing that the new crop of pepper was beginning to make its appearance, and they could now furnish us with from one or two hundred bags per day, and would no doubt be enabled to complete loading the ship in the course of forty days. Being in pursuit of a cargo, and having been always on friendly terms with the natives of this place, whom I did not consider worse than those of other parts of the coast, and feeling beside some security from the fact that we had already been warned by some of our old friends not to place too much confidence in any of them, we considered the danger but trifling, and therefore concluded a contract with them, and proceeded at once with the ship to Qualah Battoo.

"Strict regulations were then established for the security and protection of the ship. In the absence of the captain, not more than two Malays were to be permitted on board at the same time; and no boats should be allowed to approach her in the night time upon any pretence whatever, without calling an officer. Then mustering all hands upon the quarterdeck, I made a few remarks, acquainting them with my apprehensions, and impressing on their minds the importance of a good look-out, particularly in the night, and expressed my firm conviction, that vigilance alone would prevent the surprise and capture of the ship, and the sacrifice of all our lives. Having thus done all we could to guard against surprise, and put the ship in as good a state of defence as possible, keeping her entire armament in good and efficient order, and firing every night an eight o'clock gun, to apprise the natives that we were not sleeping upon our posts, we commenced taking in pepper, and so continued for three or four days, the Malays appearing very friendly.

"On Monday, February 7, 1831, early in the morning, while we were at breakfast, my old and tried friend, Po Adam, a native well-known to traders on this coast, came on board in a small canoe from his residence at Pulo-Kio, in order to proceed on shore in the ship's boat, which shortly after started with the second officer, four seamen and myself. On our way Po Adam expressed much anxiety for the safety of the ship, and also an entire want of confidence in Mr. Knight, the first officer, remarking in his broken English, '*he no look sharp, no understand Malay-man.*"

"On being asked if he *really* believed his countrymen would dare to attack the ship, he replied in the affirmative. I then observed to the second officer that it certainly behooved us, the boat's crew, who were more exposed than any of the ship's company, to be on our guard against surprise and proposed when we next came on shore to come prepared to defend ourselves.

"When we reached the landing we were kindly received, as usual. The natives were bringing in pepper very slowly; only now and then a single Malay would make his appearance with a bag upon his head, and it was not until nearly three o'clock in the afternoon that sufficient was collected to commence weighing; and between three and four o'clock the first boat started from the shore. The natives were, however, still bringing in pepper, with a promise of another boat load during the day. This was a mere subterfuge to keep us on shore.

"As the boat was passing out of the river, I noticed her stop off one of the points, and believing it to be the object of her crew to steal pepper, and secrete it among the neighboring high grass, two men were sent down to look after them. They soon returned, remarking that there appeared to be nothing wrong. The ship lay about three-fourths of a mile from the shore, and between the scale-house and the beach there was a piece of rising ground, so that standing at the scales we could just see the ship's topgallant yards.

"I had observed a vessel in the offing in the course of the day, apparently approaching this place or Soosoo, and, being at leisure, I walked towards the beach to ascertain if she had hoisted any national colours. The instant I had proceeded far enough to see our ship's hull, I observed that the pepper-boat, which was at this time within two or three hundred feet of her, appeared to contain a large number of men. My suspicions were instantly aroused, and I returned to question the men who were sent down to the mouth of the river.

"I was then informed, for the first time, that as they had approached the boat six or seven Malays jumped up from the high grass and rushed on board her; and as she passed out of the river, they saw her take in from a passing ferry boat about the same number; but as they all appeared to be '*youngsters*,' to use their own expression, they did not think the circumstance

of sufficient importance to mention it. They were reprimanded for such an omission of duty, accompanied with the remark:

"'Your youngsters, as you call them, will, I suspect, be found old enough in iniquity, to capture the ship, if once admitted upon her decks.'

"The words of Po Adam, that morning, that '*Mr. Knight no look sharp, no understand Malay-man,*' now struck me with their full force and a fearful foreboding, and I appealed to Mr. Barry, the second officer, for his opinion as to what would be Mr. Knight's probable course, remarking '*he certainly will not disobey his orders.*' Mr. Barry, however, expressed his fears as to the result, remarking he knew so well the contempt which Mr. Knight entertained for these people, 'that he will probably conclude your precautions to be altogether unnecessary, and that he can allow them to come on board with impunity, without your ever knowing anything of the circumstances, and no harm will come of it.'

"This view of the case certainly did not allay my anxiety, and I observed, 'if your predictions prove correct, the ship is taken,' but concluding it to be altogether too late for us on shore to render any assistance to the ship, and still clinging to the hope that Mr. Knight would, after all, be faithful to his trust, Mr. Barry and two men were directed to walk towards the beach without any apparent concern, and watch the movements on board.

"I should have remarked, that on my own way up the beach, just before I passed near a tree under the shade of which a group of ten or twelve natives were apparently holding a consultation, all conversation ceased. The object of this meeting, as I was afterwards informed, was to consider whether it would be better to kill us *before* attempting to take the ship or *afterwards;* and the conclusion arrived at was to be sure of the ship *first*, the killing of us appearing to them as easy, to use their own simile, as cutting off the heads of so many fowls; the manner

*how* had already been decided, the time *when* was all there was to be considered—a native having been already appointed, and the price fixed for the assassination of each of the boat's crew. The price set upon my life was one thousand dollars, for the second officer's, five hundred dollars, and for each of the seamen one hundred dollars.

"As soon as Mr. Barry has reached an elevation where he could fairly see the ship's hull, he turned short round, and walked, without hastening his steps, directly towards me—passing me, however, without discovering any emotion, and said, 'there is trouble on board, sir."

"To the question 'What did you see?' he replied, 'men jumping overboard.'

"Convinced at once, of our own perilous situation, and that our escape depended on extremely cautious and judicious management, I answered:

"'We must show no alarm, but muster the men, and order them into the boat.'

"We deliberately pushed off from the shore, the Malays having no suspicion of our design, thinking it to be our intention, by our apparently unconcerned manner, to cross the river for a stroll in the opposite Bazar as was our frequent custom. The moment the boat's stern had left the bank of the river, Po Adam sprang into her in a great state of excitement, to whom I exclaimed:

"'What! do you come, too, Adam?'

"He answered: 'You got trouble, Captain, if they kill you, must kill Po Adam first.'

"He suggested we should steer the boat as far as possible from the western bank of the river, which was here not more than one hundred feet wide, when I remarked to the boat's crew:

"'Now spring to your oars, my lads, for your lives, or we are all dead men.'

"Adam exhibited the utmost alarm and consternation, encouraging my men to exert themselves, and talking English and Acheenise both in the same breath—now exclaiming in Acheenise, 'di-yoong di yoong hi!' And then exhorting them to 'pull, pull strong!'

"As we doubled one of the points we saw hundreds of natives rushing towards the river's mouth, brandishing their weapons, and otherwise menacing us. Adam, upon seeing this, was struck with dismay, and exclaimed 'if got blunderbuss will kill all,' but luckily they were not provided with that weapon.

"A ferry-boat was next discovered with ten or twelve Malays in her, armed with long spears, evidently waiting to intercept us. I ordered Mr. Barry into the bows of the boat, with Adam's sword, to make demonstrations, and also to con the boat in such a manner as to run down the ferry boat, which I concluded was our only chance to escape. With headlong impetuosity we were rushing towards our antagonist, nerved with the feeling of desperation. With profound stillness and breathless anxiety we awaited the moment of collision.

"The points of their pikes could be plainly seen. Already I observed Mr. Barry with his sword raised, as if in the act of striking. But when we had approached within some twenty feet, her crew appeared completely panic-struck, and made an effort to get out of our way. It was, however, a close shave —so close that one of their spears was actually over the stern of our boat. The Malays on the bank of the river appeared frantic at our escape, and ran into the water to their armpits in their endeavors to intercept us, waving their swords above their heads, and shouting at the top of their voices.

"We had now time calmly to contemplate the scene through which we had just passed, with hearts, I trust, grateful to God for his kind protection and safe guidance in the midst of its perils. This was the part of their plan, otherwise well con-

ceived, which was defective—they had taken no measures to prevent our escape from the shore, never doubting for a moment that our lives were at their disposal, unprotected and defenceless as they saw us.

"Our doomed ship lay tranquilly in the roads, with sails furled, and a pepper boat alongside, with a multitude of natives in every part of her, and none of her own crew visible, with the exception of a man on the top gallant yard, and some ten or twelve heads just even with the surface of the water.

"The pirates were conspicuous in every corner of the *Friendship's* deck, waving their cloths, and making signals of success to the natives on shore. My first impulse was to propose boarding her but I was very properly reminded that if the ship with her full armament had been taken with so many of her crew on board, we could do nothing in our unarmed state toward her recapture.

"We continued, however, to row towards the ship until we could see the Malays pointing her muskets at us from the quarterdeck, and they appeared also to be clearing away the stern chasers, which we knew to be loaded to their muzzles with grape and langrage. At this moment, three large Malay boats crowded with men were seen coming out of the river, directly towards us. While debating whether it would not be best to proceed at once to Muckie for assistance, which was some twenty-five miles distant, where we knew two or three American vessels were laying, heavy clouds commenced rolling down over the mountains, and the rumbling of distant thunder, and sharp flashes of lightning gave sure indications that the land wind would be accompanied with deluges of rain, rendering the night one of Egyptian darkness, in which it would be almost impossible to grope our way safely along shore towards that place.

"Under these discouraging prospects, Po Adam advised us

to proceed to Pulo Kio, and take shelter in his fort. Submitting ourselves almost wholly to his guidance, we at once pulled away for that place, but before we reached it his heart failed him, and he represented his fort as not sufficiently strong to resist a vigorous assault, and he would not therefore be responsible for our lives, but suggested we should proceed to Soosoo, some two miles further from the scene of the outrage. We accordingly proceeded for Soosoo river, which we had scarcely entered when Po Adam's confidence again forsook him, and he advised us not to land. We therefore only filled a keg with water from the river and came out over the bar, intending to make the best of our way to Muckie.

"The night now came on dark and lowering, and just as we left Soosoo river, the land wind, which had been some time retarded by a strong sea breeze overtook us, accompanied with heavy thunder and torrents of rain, which came pelting down upon our unprotected heads. Sharp flashes of lightning occasionally shot across the gloom, which rendered the scene still more fearful. We double manned two of the oars with Mr. Barry and Po Adam, and I did the best I could to keep the boat's head down the coast, it being impossible to see any object on shore, or even to hear the surf by which we could judge our distance from it. Having proceeded in this way until we began to think ourselves near North Tallapow, off which was a dangerous shoal, it became a matter of concern how we should keep clear of it. We frequently laid upon our oars and listened, to ascertain if we could hear it break. Directly we felt the boat lifted upon a high wave, which we knew must be the roller upon this shoal, which passing, broke with a fearful crash some three or four hundred feet from us.

"Having thus providentially passed this dangerous spot in safety, the weather began to clear a little, and here and there a star appeared. The off shore wind, too, became more steady

and the rain ceased. We ripped up some gunny bags which were left in the boat, and tied them together for a sail, under which we found the boat bounded along quite briskly; we therefore laid in our oars, all hands being quite exhausted, and proceeded in this way the rest of the distance to Muckie, where we arrived at about one o'clock, A. M.

"We found here the ship *James Monroe*, Porter, of New York, brig *Governor Endicott*, Jenks, of Salem, and brig *Palmer*, Powers, of Boston. On approaching the roads, we were first hailed from the *Governor Endicott*, and to the question 'What boat is that?' the response was 'the *Friendship*, from Qualah Battoo,' which answer was immediately followed with the question 'Is that *you*, Capt. Endicott,' 'Yes,' was the answer, 'with all that are left of us.'

"Having communicated with the other vessels, their commanders repaired on board the *Governor Endicott*, when it was instantly concluded to proceed with their vessels to Qualah Battoo, and endeavor to recover the ship. These vessels were laying with most of their sails unbent, but their decks were quickly all life and animation, and the work of bending sails proceeded so rapidly that before 3 o'clock all the vessels were out of the roads and heading up the coast towards Qualah Battoo. It was our intention to throw as many of the crews of the *Governor Endicott* and *Palmer* on board the *James Monroe*, as could be prudently spared, she being the largest vessel, and proceed with her directly into the roads, and lay her alongside the *Friendship*, and carry her by boarding—the other vessels following at a short distance. But as soon as we had completed all our arrangements, and while we were yet several miles outside the port, the sea breeze began to fail us, with indications that the land wind, like that of the day before, would be accompanied with heavy rain. We, however, stood on towards the place until the off shore wind and rain reached us when all

three vessels were obliged to anchor and suspend further operations until the next morning.

"Before dark I had taken the bearings of the ship by compass, intending, if circumstances favored it, to propose a descent upon her during the night; but the heavy rain continued the most part of it and we were baffled in that design.

"Daylight found us upon the decks of the *Monroe*, watching for the ship, which, in the indistinct light, could not be discovered in the roads. The horizon in the offing was also searched unsuccessfully with our glasses, but we at last discovered her close in shore, far to the westward of her late anchorage, inside a large cluster of dangerous shoals, to which position, as it then appeared, the Malays must have removed her during the night. One thing was certain we could not carry out our design of running her alongside in her present situation; the navigation would be too dangerous for either of the ships. At this moment we saw a prou, or Malay trading craft, approaching the roads from the westward, with which I communicated, hired a canoe, and sent a messenger on shore to inform the Rajahs that if they would give the ship up peaceably to us we would not molest them, otherwise we should fire both upon her and the town.

"After waiting a considerable time for the return of the messenger, during which we could see boats loaded with plunder passing close in shore from the ship, this delay seemed only a subterfuge to gain time, and we fired a gun across the bows of one of them. In a few minutes the canoe which we had sent on shore was seen putting off. The answer received, however, was one of defiance: 'that they should not give her up so easily, but we might take her *if we could*.'

"All three vessels then opened fire upon the town and ship, which was returned by the forts on shore, the Malays also firing our ship's guns at us. The first shot from one of the forts passed between the masts of the *Governor Endicott*, not ten

The *Glide* (See Chapter XXVI)

The *Friendship*

feet above the heads of the crew, and the second struck the water just under her counter. This vessel had been kedged in close to the shore within point blank shot of the fort, with springs upon her cable, determined on making every gun tell. The spirited manner in which their fire was returned soon silenced this fort, which mounted six six-pounders and several small brass pieces.

"It appeared afterward, by the testimony of one of my crew, who was confined here, that the firing was so effectual that it dismounted their guns and split the carriages. The other two forts, situated at a greater distance from the beach, continued firing, and no progress was made towards recapturing the ship, which, after all, was our only object. It was now between three and four o'clock, and it was certain that if the Malays were allowed to hold possession of the ship much longer, they would either get her on shore or burn her. We then held a council of war on board the *Monroe*, and concluded to board her with as large a force as we could carry in three boats; and that the command of the expedition should, of course, devolve upon me. At this juncture the ship ceased firing. We observed a column of smoke rise from her decks abreast the mainmast, and there appeared to be great confusion on board. We subsequently ascertained that they had blown themselves up by setting fire to an open keg of powder from which they were loading the guns after having expended all the cartridges.

"The ship lay with her port side towards us, and, with the intention of getting out of the range of her guns, we pulled to the westward at an angle of some 33 deg., until we opened her starboard bow, when we bore up in three divisions for boarding, one at each gangway, and the other over the bows. We were now before the wind, and two oars in each boat were sufficient to propel them; the rest of the crew, armed to the teeth with muskets, cutlasses and pistols, sat quietly in their places, with their muskets pointed at the ship as the boats approached.

"The Malays now, for the first time, seemed to comprehend our design, and as we neared the ship, were struck with consternation, and commenced deserting her with all possible dispatch, and in the greatest confusion. The numerous boats of all descriptions alongside were immediately filled, and the others jumped overboard and swam for the shore. When we reached the ship, there was to all appearances no one on board. Still fearing some treachery, we approached her with the same caution, and boarded her, cutlasses in hand. Having reached her decks and finding them deserted, before we laid aside our arms a strict search was made with instructions to cut down any who should be found and give no quarter. But she was completely forsaken—not a soul on board.

"Her appearance, at the time we boarded her defies description; suffice it to say, every part of her bore ample testimony to the violence and destruction with which she had been visited. That many lives had been sacrificed her blood-stained decks abundantly testified. We found her within pistol shot of the beach, with most of her sails cut loose and flying from the yards. Why they had not succeeded in their attempts to get her on shore, was soon apparent. A riding turn on the chain around the windlass, which they were not sailors enough to clear, had no doubt prevented it. There had been evidently a fruitless attempt to cut it off. While we were clearing the chain, and preparing to kedge the ship off into the roads, the Malays, still bent upon annoying us and unwilling to abandon their prize, were seen drawing a gun over the sandy beach upon a drag directly under our stern, which, being fired, it jumped off the carriage and was abandoned. It was the work of a short time for us to kedge the ship off into deep water and anchor her in comparative security alongside the other ships in the roads.

"The next morning a canoe was seen approaching the *James Monroe* from Pulo Kio, with five or six men in her whom we

took, as a matter of course, to be natives; but we were soon hailed from that ship, and informed that four of the number were a part of our own crew. Their haggard and squalid appearance bespoke what they had suffered. It would seem impossible that in the space of four days, men could, by any casualty, so entirely lose their identity. It was only by asking their names that I knew any of them. They were without clothing other than loose pieces of cotton cloth thrown over their persons, their hair matted, their bodies crisped and burnt in large, running blisters, besides having been nearly devoured by musquitos, the poison of whose stings had left evident traces of its virulence; their flesh wasted away, and even the very tones of their voices changed. They had been wandering about in the jungle without food ever since the ship was taken. Their account of the capture of the ship was as follows:

"When the pepper-boat came alongside, it was observed by the crew that all on board her were strangers. They were also better dressed than boatmen generally, all of them having on white or yellow jackets, and new ivory-handled kreises. No notice appeared to be taken of these suspicious circumstances by the mate, and all except two men, who were left to pass up pepper, were admitted indiscriminately to come on board. One of the crew, named Wm. Parnell, who was stationed at the gangway to pass along pepper, made some remark, to call the mate's attention to the number of natives on board, and was answered in a gruff manner, and asked if he was afraid. "No,' replied the man, 'not afraid, but I know it to be contrary to the regulations of the ship.'

"He was ordered, with an oath, to pass along pepper and mind his own business. The natives were also seen by the crew sharpening their kreises upon the grindstone which stood upon the forecastle, and a man named Chester, who was subsequently killed while starting pepper down the fore hatch, asked

them in pantomine what so many of them wanted on board and was answered in the same way, that they came off to see the ship. He was heard by one of the crew to say, 'we must look out you do not come for anything worse,' at the same time drawing a handspike within his reach.

The Malays had distributed themselves about the decks in the most advantageous manner for an attack, and at some preconcerted signal a simultaneous assault upon the crew was made in every part of the ship. Two Malays were seen by the steward to rush with their kreises upon Mr. Knight, who was very badly stabbed in the back and side, the weapons appearing to be buried in his body up to their very hilts. Chester at the fore hatch, notwithstanding his distrust and precaution, was killed outright and supposed to have fallen into the hold. The steward at the galley was also badly wounded, and was only saved from death by the kreis striking hard against a short rib, which took the force of the blow. Of the two men on the stage over the ship's side, one was killed and the other so badly wounded as to be made a cripple for life.

"The chief officer was seen, after he was stabbed, to rush aft upon the starboard side of the quarterdeck and endeavor to get a boarding pike out of the beckets abreast the mizzen rigging, where he was met by Parnell to whom he exclaimed, '*do your duty.*' At the same instant two or three Malays rushed upon him and he was afterwards seen lying dead near the same spot, with a boarding pike under him.

"On the instant the crew found the ship attacked, they attempted to get aft into the cabin for arms but the Malays had placed a guard on each side of the companion-way which prevented them; they then rushed forward for handspikes and were again intercepted; and being completely bewildered, surprised and defenceless, and knowing that several of their shipmates had already been killed outright before their eyes,

and others wounded, all who could swim plunged overboard, and the others took to the rigging or crept over the bows out of sight. The decks were now cleared and the pirates had full possession of the ship.

"The men in the water then consulted together what they should do, concluding it certain death to return to the ship; and they determined it would be the safest to swim on shore, and secrete themselves in the jungle; but as they approached it they observed the beach about Qualah Battoo lined with natives, and they proceeded more to the westward and landed upon a point called Ouj'ong Lamah Moodah nearly two miles distant from the ship. On their way they had divested themselves of every article of clothing, and they were entirely naked at the time they landed.

"As it was not yet dark, they sought safety and seclusion in the jungle, from whence they emerged as soon as they thought it safe, and walked upon the beach in the direction of Cape Felix and Annalaboo, intending to make the best of their way to the latter place, with the hope of meeting there some American vessel. At daylight they sought a hiding-place again in the bushes, but it afforded them only a partial protection from the scorching rays of the sun from which, being entirely naked, they experienced the most dreadful effects. Hunger and thirst began also to make demands upon them; but no food could anywhere be found. They tried to eat grass, but their stomachs refused it. They found a few husks of the cocoanut, which they chewed, endeavoring to extract some nourishment from them but in vain.

"They staid in their hiding-place the whole of this day, and saw Malays passing along the beach but were afraid to discover themselves. At night they pursued their journey again, during which they passed several small streams, where they slaked their thirst but obtained no food. About midnight they came

to a very broad river, which they did not venture to cross. The current was very rapid, and having been thirty-six hours without food of any kind, they did not dare attempt swimming it. Here, then, they were put completely *hors de combat;* they found for want of food their energies were fast giving way, and still they believed their lives depended on not being discovered.

"Since further progress towards Annalaboo appeared impossible, they resolved to retrace their steps, endeavor to pass Qualah Battoo in the night without being discovered and reach the hospitable residence of Po Adam, at Pulo Kio. They accordingly took up their line of march towards that place, and reached, as they supposed, the neighborhood of Cape Felix by the morning, when they again retreated to the jungle, where they lay concealed another day, being Wednesday, the day of the recapture of the ship, but at too great distance to hear the firing. At night they again resumed their journey, and having reached the spot where the Malays landed in so much haste when they deserted the ship, they found the beach covered with canoes, a circumstance which aroused their suspicions but for which they were at a loss to account.

"They now concluded to take a canoe as the most certain way of passing Qualah Battoo without discovery, and so proceed to Pulo Kio. As they passed the roads, they heard one of the ship's bells strike the hour, and the well-known cry of '*All's Well*,' but fearing it was some decoy of the natives, they would not approach her but proceeded on their way, and landed at Pulo Kio, secreting themselves once more in the jungle, near the residence of Po Adam until the morning, when four naked and half-famished white men were seen to emerge from the bushes and approach his fort with feeble steps. As soon as recognized they were welcomed by him with the strongest demonstrations of delight; slapping his hands, shouting at the top of his lungs, and in the exuberance of his joy committing all kinds of extrava-

gances. They now heard of the recapture of the ship, and the escape of the boat's crew on shore, who, it had never occurred to them, were not already numbered with the dead.

"Having refreshed themselves (being the first food they had tasted in seventy-two hours), they were conveyed by Adam and his men on board the *James Monroe* in the pitiful condition of which we have before spoken.

"In the course of the latter part of the same day, another canoe, with a white flag displayed, was observed approaching the fleet from the direction of Qualah Battoo, containing three or four Chinamen who informed us that four of our own men, two of whom were wounded, one very severely, were at their houses on shore, where their wounds had been dressed and they had been otherwise cared for; and that we could ransom them of the Rajahs at ten dollars each. To this I readily agreed, and they were soon brought off to the ship in a sampan, and proved to be Charles Converse and Gregorie Pedechio, seamen, Lorenzo Migell, cook, and William Francis, steward.

"Converse was laid out at full length upon a board, as if dead, evidently very badly wounded. The story of the poor fellow was a sad one. He, with John Davis, being the two tallest men in the ship, were on the stage over the side when she was attacked. Their first impulse was, to gain the ship's decks, but they were defeated in this design by the pirates who stood guard over the gangway and making repeated thrusts at them. They then made a desperate attempt to pass over the pepper-boat, and thus gain the water, in doing which they were both most severely wounded. Having reached the water, Converse swam round to the ship's bows and grasped the chain, to which he clung as well as he was able, being badly crippled in one of his hands, with other severe wounds in various parts of his body. When it became dark, he crawled up over the bows as well as his exhausted strength from the loss of blood

would permit, and crept to the foot of the forecastle stairs, where he supposed he must have fainted, and fell prostrate upon the floor without the power of moving himself one inch further.

"The Malays believing him dead, took no heed of him, but traveled up and down over his body the whole night. Upon attempting to pass over the boat, after being foiled in his endeavor to reach the ship's decks, a native made a pass at his head with his '*parrung*,' a weapon resembling most a butcher's cleaver, which he warded off by throwing up his naked arm, and the force of the blow fell upon the outerpart of his hand, severing all the bones and sinews belonging to three of his fingers, and leaving untouched only the fore finger and thumb. Besides this he received a kreis wound in the back which must have penetrated to the stomach, for he bled from his mouth the most part of the night. He was likewise very badly wounded just below the groin, which came so nearly through the leg as to discolor the flesh upon the inside.

"Wonderful, however, to relate, notwithstanding the want of proper medical advice, and with nothing but the unskillful treatment of three or four shipmasters, the thermometer ranging all the time, from 85 to 90 deg., this man recovered from his wounds, but in his crippled hand he carried the marks of Malay perfidy to his watery grave, having been drowned at sea from on board of the brig *Fair America*, in the winter of 1833–4, which was, no doubt, occasioned by this wound which unfitted him for holding on properly while aloft.

"The fate of his companion Davis, was a tragical one. He could not swim, and after reaching the water was seen to struggle hard to gain the boat's tackle-fall at the stern, to which he clung until the Malays dropped the pepper boat astern, when he was observed apparently imploring mercy at their hands, which the wretches did not heed, but butchered him upon the spot.

"Gregory was the man seen aloft when we had cleared the

river, cutting strange antics which we did not at the time comprehend. By his account, when he reached the fore topgallant yard, the pirates commenced firing the ship's muskets at him, which he dodged by getting over the front side of the yard and sail and down upon the collar of the stay, and then reversing the movement. John Masury related that after being wounded in the side, he crept over the bows of the ship and down upon an anchor, where he was sometime employed in dodging the thrusts of a boarding pike in the hands of a Malay, until the arrival of a reinforcement from the shore when every one fearing lest he should not get his full share of plunder, ceased further to molest the wounded.

"The ship, the first night after her capture, according to the testimony of these men, was a perfect pandemonium, and a Babel of the most discordant sounds. The ceaseless moaning of the surf upon the adjacent shore, the heavy peals of thunder, and sharp flashings of lightning directly over their heads, the sighing of the wind in wild discords through the rigging, like the wailings of woe from the *manes* of their murdered shipmates; and all this intermingled with the more earthly sounds of the squealing of pigs, the screeching of fowls, the cackling of roosters, the unintelligible jargon of the natives, jangling and vociferating, with horrible laughter, shouts and yells, in every part of her, and in the boats alongside carrying off plunder, their black figures unexpectedly darting forth from every unseen quarter, as if rising up and again disappearing through the decks, and gambolling about in the dark, must have been like a saturnalia of demons.

"It is the general impression that Malays, being Musselmen, have a holy horror of swine, as unclean animals; the very touch of which imposes many ablutions and abstinence from food for several days together, but, according to the testimony of my men, it was perfectly marvellous how they handled those

on board our ship, going in their pens, seizing, struggling, and actually embracing them, until they succeeded in throwing every one overboard.

"The morning succeeding the capture of the *Friendship*, affairs on board appeared to be getting to be a little more settled, when several Chinamen came off and performed the part of good Samaritans, taking the wounded men on shore to their houses, and dressing their wounds with some simple remedies which at least kept down inflammation. In doing this, however, they were obliged to barricade their dwellings, to guard them against the insulting annoyances of the natives.

"Qualah Battoo bazar that day presented a ludicrous spectacle. Almost every Malay was decked out in a white, blue, red, checked, or striped shirt, or some other European article of dress or manufacture stolen from the ship, not even excepting the woolen table cloth belonging to the cabin, which was seen displayed over the shoulders of a native, all seemingly quite proud of their appearance, and strutting about with solemn gravity and oriental self-complacency. Their novel and grotesque appearance could not fail to suggest the idea that a tribe of monkeys had made a descent upon some unfortunate clothing establishment, and each had seized and carried off whatever article of dress was most suited to his taste and fancy.

"The ship was now once more in our possession, with what remained of her cargo and crew. She was rifled of almost every movable article on board, and scarcely anything but her pepper remaining. Of our outward cargo every dollar of of specie, and every pound of opium had, of course, become a prey to them. All her spare sails and rigging were gone—not a needle or ball of twine, palm, marling spike, or piece of rope were left! All our charts, chronometers and other nautical instruments—all our clothing and bedding, were also gone; as well as our cabin furniture and small stores of every descrip-

tion. Our ship's provisions, such as beef, pork and most of our bread, had, however, been spared. Of our armament nothing but the large guns remained. Every pistol, musket, cutlass, and boarding pike, with our entire stock of powder, had been taken.

"With assistance from the other vessels we immediately began making the necessary preparations to leave the port with all possible dispatch, but owing to much rainy weather we did not accomplish it for three days after recapturing the ship, when we finally succeeded in leaving the place in company with the fleet bound for South Tallapow, where we arrived on the fourteenth of February. When we landed at this place with the other masters and supercargoes, we were followed through the streets of the bazar by the natives in great crowds, exulting and hooting, with exclamations similar to these:

"'Who great man now, Malay or American?' 'How many man American dead?' 'How many man Malay dead?'

"We now commenced in good earnest to prepare our ship for sea. Our voyage had been broken up, and there was nothing left for us but to return to the United States. We finally left Muckie, whither we had already proceeded, on the twenty-seventh of February, for Pulo Kio (accompanied by the ship *Delphos*, Capt. James D. Gillis, and the *Gov. Endicott*, Capt Jenks), where I was yet in hopes to recover some of my nautical instruments. With the assistance of Po Adam, I succeeded in obtaining, for a moderate sum, my sextant and one of my chronometers, which enabled me to navigate the ship. We sailed from Pulo Kio on the fourth of March, and arrived at Salem on the sixteenth of July.

"The intense interest and excitement caused by our arrival home may still be remembered. It being nearly calm, as we approached the harbor we were boarded several miles outside by crowds of people, all anxious to learn the most minute par-

ticulars of our sad misfortune, the news of which had preceeded us by the arrival of a China ship at New York which we had met at St. Helena. The curiosity of some of our visitors was so great that they would not be satisfied until they knew the exact spot where every man stood, who was either killed or wounded. Even the casing of the cabin, so much cut up in search of money or other valuables, was an object of the greatest interest.

"But the feeling of presumptuous exultation and proud defiance exhibited by the natives, was of brief duration. The avenger was at hand. In something less than a year after this outrage, the U. S. Frigate, *Potomac*, Com. Downes, appeared off the port of Qualah Battoo, and anchored in the outer roads, disguised as a merchantman. Every boat which visited her from the shore was detained that her character might not be made known to the natives. Several amusing anecdotes were told, of the fear and terror exhibited in the countenances of the natives, when they so unexpectedly found themselves imprisoned within the wooden walls of the *Potomac*, surrounded by such a formidable armament, which bespoke the errand that had attracted her to their shores. They prostrated themselves at full length upon her decks, trembling in the most violent manner, and appearing to think nothing but certain death awaited them.

"A reconnoitering party was first sent on shore, professedly for the purpose of traffic. But when they approached, the natives came down to the beach in such numbers that it excited their suspicions that the frigate's character and errand had somehow preceded her, and it was considered prudent not to land. Having, therefore, examined the situation of the forts and the means of defence, they returned to the *Potomac*. The same night some 300 men, under the guidance of Mr. Barry, the former second officer of the *Friendship*, who was assistant sailing-master of the frigate, landed to the westward of the place

with the intention of surprising the forts and the town, but by some unaccountable delay the morning was just breaking when the detachment had effected a landing, and as they were marching along the beach towards the nearest fort, a Malay came out of it, by whom they were discovered and an alarm given.

"They pushed on, however, and captured the forts by storm after some hard fighting, and set fire to the town which was burnt to ashes. The natives, not even excepting the women, fought with great desperation, many of whom would not yield until shot down or sabred on the spot. The next day the frigate was dropped in within gunshot, and bombarded the place, to impress them with the power and ability of the United States to avenge any act of piracy or other indignity offered by them to her flag.

"When I visited the coast again, some five months after this event, I found the deportment of the natives materially changed. There was now no longer exhibited either arrogance or proud defiance. All appeared impressed with the irresistible power of a nation that could send such tremendous engines of war as the *Potomac* frigate upon their shores to avenge any wrongs committed upon its vessels, and that it would be better policy for them to attend to their pepper plantations and cultivate the arts of peace, than subject themselves to such severe retribution as had followed this act of piracy upon the *Friendship*.

"Perhaps, in justice to Po Adam, I ought to remark that the account circulated by his countrymen of his conniving at, if not being actually connected with this piracy (a falsehood with which they found the means of deceiving several American shipmasters soon after the affair), is a base calumny against a worthy man, and has no foundation whatever in truth. The property he had in my possession on board the ship, in gold ornaments of various kinds, besides money, amounting to several thousand dollars, all of which he lost by the capture of the ship and

never recovered, bears ample testimony to the falsity of this charge. His countrymen also worked upon the avarice and cupidity of the king by misrepresentations of his exertions to recover the ship, thereby preventing them from making him a present of her which they pretended was their intention. His sable majesty, in consequence, absolved every one of Po Adam's debtors, all along the coast, from paying him their debts. He also confiscated all his property he could find, such as fishing-boats, nets and lines and other fishing tackle, and appropriated the proceeds to his own use, so that Po Adam was at once reduced to penury. All this was in accordance with commodore Bieulieu's account, upwards of two hundred years before, viz: 'If they ever *suspect* that any one bears them an ill will, they endeavor to ruin him by false accusations.'

"The king also sent a small schooner down the coast, soon after, to reap further vengeance upon Po Adam. Arriving at Pulo Kio, while Adam was absent, they rifled his fort of everything valuable and even took the ornaments, such as armlets and anklets, off the person of his wife. Intelligence having been conveyed to Po Adam of this outrage, he arrived home the night before the schooner had left the harbor, and incensed, as it was natural he should be, at such base and cowardly treatment, he immediately opened a fire upon her and sunk her in nine feet of water. She was afterwards fished up by the *Potomac* frigate and converted into fire-wood.

"We do not know if Po Adam is now living, but some sixteen years since, we saw a letter from him to one of our eminent merchants, Joseph Peabody, Esq., of Salem, Mass., asking for assistance from our citizens and stating truthfully all the facts in his case. I endeavored at the time, through our representative to Congress, to bring the matter before that body but from some cause it did not succeed, and the poor fellow has been allowed to *live*, if not *die*, in his penury. We will, however,

permit him to state his own case, in his own language, which he does in the following letter, written at his own dictation:

"'Qualah Battoo, 7th October, 1841. Some years have passed since the capture of the *Friendship*, commanded by my old friend, Capt. Endicott.

"'It perhaps is not known to you, that, by saving the life of Capt. Endicott, and the ship itself from destruction, I became, in consequence, a victim to the hatred and vengeance of my misguided countrymen; some time since, the last of my property was set on fire and destroyed, and now, for having been the steadfast friend of Americans, I am not only destitute, but an object of derision to my countrymen.

"'You, who are so wealthy and so prosperous, I have thought, that, if acquainted with these distressing circumstances, you would not turn a deaf ear to my present condition.

"'I address myself to you, because through my agency many of your ships have obtained cargoes, but I respectfully beg that you will have the kindness to state my case to the rich pepper merchants of Salem and Boston, firmly believing that from their generosity, and your own, I shall not have reason to regret the warm and sincere friendship ever displayed towards your Captains, and all other Americans, trading on this Coast. . . .

"'Wishing you, Sir, and your old companions in the Sumatra trade, and their Captains, health and prosperity, and trusting that, before many moons I shall, through your assistance, be released from my present wretched condition, believe me very respectfully,

"'Your faithful servant,

"(Signed) 'Po Adam' (in Arabic characters)."

# CHAPTER XVIII

## EARLY SOUTH SEA VOYAGES

(1832)

FIFTY years ago two English missionaries in the Fijis wrote a book in which they said that the traffic in sandalwood, tortoise-shell and beche-de-mer among those islands "has been, and still is chiefly in the hands of Americans from the port of Salem." No corner of the Seven Seas seems to have been too hostile or remote to be overlooked by the shipmasters of old Salem in their quest for trade. The first vessels of the East India Company to touch at the Fijis made a beginning of that commerce a little more than a hundred years ago. No more than four years after their pioneer voyage, however, Captain William Richardson in the Salem bark *Active* was trading with the natives and continuing his voyage to Canton in 1811. During the next half century the untutored people of the Fijis pictured the map of America as consisting mostly of a place called Salem whose ships and sailors were seldom absent from their palm-fringed beaches.

When Commodore Wilkes sailed on his exploring expedition of the South Seas in 1840, his pilot and interpreter was Captain Benjamin Vandeford of Salem. He died on the way home from this famous cruise and Commodore Wilkes wrote of him: "He had formerly been in command of various vessels sailing from Salem, and had made many voyages to the Fiji Islands. During our stay there he was particularly useful in superintending all trade carried on to supply the ship." It was another Salem skipper of renown, Captain John H. Eagleston, who

carried one of Commodore Wilkes' vessels safely into port in 1840 among the Fijis by reason of his intimate knowledge of those waters.

South Sea trading in that era was a romance of commerce, crowded with perilous adventure. The brig *Charles Doggett* of Salem, commanded by Captain George Batchelder was lying off Kandora in the Fijis in 1833, when her crew was attacked by natives. Five of the seamen and the mate were killed and most of the others wounded. On her way to Manila in the same voyage the brig touched at the Pelew Islands and was again attacked, in which affray a cabin boy was killed. The *Charles Doggett* had previously played a part in one of the most romantic chapters of ocean history, the mutiny of the *Bounty*. In 1831, Captain William Driver took the brig to Tahiti whither, a short time before, the *Bounty* colony had been transported by the British Government from its first home on Pitcairn Island. There were eighty-seven of these descendants of the original mutineers, and they had been taken to Tahiti at their own request to seek a more fertile and habitable island. They were an Utopian colony, virtuous, and intensely pious, and soon disgusted with the voluptuous immoralities of the Tahitians, they became homesick for the isolated peace of Pitcairn Island, and begged to be carried back. When Captain Driver found them they besought him to take them away from Tahiti, and he embarked them for Pitcairn Island, fourteen hundred miles away. They had been gone only nine months and they rejoiced with touching eagerness and affection at seeing their old home again. Captain Driver went on his way in the *Charles Doggett*, with the satisfaction of having done a kindly deed for one of the most singularly attractive and picturesque communities known in modern history. *

*The following letter was sent to Capt. Driver and signed by George H. Nobbs, Teacher, and three of his fellow-voyagers of the company of the Bounty:

Another kind of sea-story was woven in the loss of the Salem ship *Glide* which was wrecked at Tackanova in 1832, after her company had been set upon by natives with the loss of two seamen. The South Sea Islands were very primitive in those days, and the narrative of the *Glide* as told by one of her crew portrays customs, conditions and adventures which have long since vanished. The *Glide* was owned by the famous Salem shipping merchant Joseph Peabody, and commanded by Captain Henry Archer. She sailed for the South Pacific in 1829, with a crew of young men hailing from her home port. While at New Zealand a journal kept on board records that "the presence of several English whale ships helped to relieve the most timid of us from any feeling of insecurity because of the treachery of the natives. Among the visitors on board was a chief supposed to have been concerned in the massacre of the ship *Boyd's* crew in the Bay of Islands. Some of the particulars of this tragedy were related to us by foreigners resident at New Zealand. The chief was a man of very powerful frame, and of an exceedingly repulsive appearance, The cook said: 'There, that fellow looks as though he could devour any of us without salt.'"

A little later in the voyage the *Glide* hit a reef and her captain decided that she must be hove down and repaired. How small these old-time vessels were is shown in this process of heaving them down, or careening on some sandy beach when their hulls needed cleaning or repairs. In the Peabody Museum

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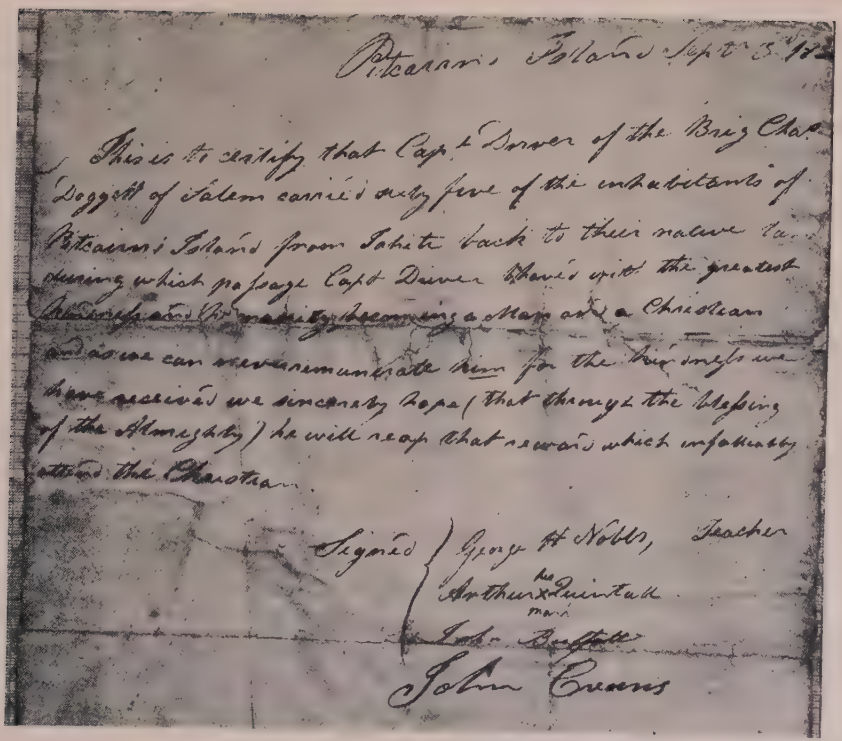
"Pitcairns Island,
Sept. 3rd., 1830.

This is to certify that Captain Driver of the Brig Chas. Doggett of Salem carried sixty-five of the inhabitants of Pitcairn Island from Tahiti back to their native land during which passage Capt. Driver behaved with the greatest kindness and humanity becoming a man and a Christian, and as we can never remunerate him for the kindness we have received, we sincerely hope that through the blessing of the Almighty he will reap that reward which infallibly attends the Christian."

Captain Driver



Pitcairn's Island Sept 3 18

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Signed { George H Nobbs, Teacher
Arthur his x mark Quintall
John Buffett
John Evans

Letter to Captain Driver from the "Bounty" Colonists after he had carried them from Tahiti back to Pitcairn Island. (See foot note on page 538.)

of Salem there is a painting done by one of the crew, of the Salem brig *Eunice* which was hauled ashore on a South Sea island. After stripping, emptying her and caulking her seams, the crew discovered that it was a task beyond their strength to launch her again. What did they do but assemble all the spare timber, cut down trees and hew planks, and after incredible exertion build a huge cask around the brig's dismantled hull. It was more of a cylinder than a cask, however, from which the bow and stern of the craft extended. Lines were passed to her boats and the windlass called into action as she lay at anchor close to the beach.

Then with hawsers rigged around the great cask, every possible purchase was obtained, and slowly the brig began to roll over and over toward the sea, exactly as a barrel is rolled down the skids into a warehouse. In this unique and amazing fashion the stout *Eunice* was trundled into deep water. As soon as she was afloat, the planking which encased her was stripped off and she was found to be uninjured. Then her masts were stepped and rigged, her ballast, stores and cargo put aboard, and she sailed away for Salem. The painting of this ingenious incident tells the story more convincingly than the description.

The account of the heaving down of the *Glide* is not so unusual as this but it throws an interesting light upon the problems of these resourceful mariners of other days. "To heave down the ship was an undertaking requiring great caution and ability," the journal relates. "A large ship to be entirely dismantled; a large part of her cargo to be conveyed ashore; a floating stage of spars and loose timbers constructed alongside; ourselves surrounded by cannibals, scores of which were continually about the vessel and looking as if they meditated mischief. It was well for the *Glide* that her captain not only knew the ropes but had been a ship carpenter and could use an axe.

He had not, like many masters of vessels nowadays, climbed up to the captain's berth through the cabin window. He was fully equal to this emergency."

The ship, having been hove down without mishap, was made ready for opening a trade in beche-de-mer, a species of sea slug, which was dried and carried to China as a delicacy in high repute among the people of that country. A safe anchorage was found, and the king of the nearest tribe "made pliable" by numerous gifts after which a contract was made with him for gathering the cargo. He assembled his people and set them at work erecting on the beach the row of buildings needed for storing and curing the sea slugs.

When this was done the warriors of nearby friendly tribes began to appear in canoes, bringing their wives and children. They built huts along the beach until an uproarious village had sprung up. Its people bartered tortoise shell, hogs and vegetables for iron tools, and whales' teeth, and helped gather beche-de-mer in the shallow water along the reefs. Two of the ship's officers and perhaps a dozen of the crew lived ashore for the purpose of curing the cargo. Their plant was rather imposing, consisting of a "Batter House," a hundred feet long by thirty wide in which the fish was spread and smoked; the "Trade House" in which were stored muskets, pistols, cutlasses, cloth, iron-ware, beads, etc., and the "Pot House" which contained the great kettles used for boiling the unsavory mess. In putting up these buildings the king would make a hundred of his islanders toil a week on end for a musket—and he kept the musket.

"The business aboard, the din of industry ashore, the coming and going of boats and the plying of hundreds of canoes to and from the sea reef, gave much animation to things," writes the chronicler of this voyage of the *Glide*.

"Indeed I could not but regard the scene, among islands so

little known to the world, as highly creditable to the commercial enterprise of the merchants engaged in the trade. Where next, thought I, will Salem vessels sail? North or south, around Good Hope or the Horn, we find them, officered and manned by Salem men. The *Glide's* company were thirty men, most of whom were young, strong and active, a force sufficient with our muskets, pistols, cutlasses, etc., to resist any attack from the natives. Though without a profusion of ornamental work, the *Glide* was a beautiful model, as strong as oak and ship carpenters could make her. At anchor in the harbor of Miambooa, she had a war-like appearance. Heavy cannon loaded with a cannister and grape shot projected from the port holes on each side. In each top was a chest of arms and ammunition. On deck and below, weapons of defense were so arranged as to be available at short notice. Boarding nettings eight or ten feet high were triced up around the ship by tackles, and whipping lines suspended from the ends of the lower yard-arms."

Before the journal deals with the tragedy and loss of the *Glide*, the author jots down such bits of information as this:

"One of the most powerful chiefs on this island (Overlau) at the time of our visiting it, was Mr. David Whepley, an American, and, I believe, a native of New Bedford, whence he had sailed some years before in a whale ship. For some cause, on the arrival of the vessel here, he took sudden leave and ultimately became distinguished among the natives. He was a young man apparently about thirty years of age."

The career of a trader in the South Seas three-quarters of a century ago was enlivened by incidents like the following:

"When passing within a few miles of Pennrhyn's Island, we noticed some canoes filled with savages coming off to the ship. Wishing to procure some grass for our live-stock, we hove to and awaited their approach. Their numbers and strength made it prudent to put ourselves in a defensive position; each

man was armed and our cannon, loaded with grape-shot, were run out at the port holes.

"Presently there were alongside fifty or sixty of the most repulsive monsters that I ever beheld; very tall, of complexion unmixed black, with coarse stiff hair like dog's bristles, and their language, if such it was, more resembling dogs barking than articulate speech. Their whole aspect was truly terrific. They were not permitted to come on board, but only to clamber up the sides of the vessel. The ship's channels fore and aft on both sides were filled with them. The *Glide's* company was armed, yet our situation was very perilous.

"Whilst Captain Archer was selecting some articles of trade, a spear was hurled at him by a savage standing in the larboard mizzen channels. I stood within four or five feet of the captain, and saw the savage, but his movement was so quick that I could not in season give the alarm. The captain was leaning over the larboard hencoop, his back was toward the savage, and but for a providential turning of his head, the spear would have pierced his neck. As it was, it grazed his neck and inflicted a slight wound.

"This seemed to be a signal for attack; the savages became exceedingly clamorous. The captain commanded 'Fire.' It was a fearful order and fearfully obeyed. Five or six savages, among them the one who had hurled the spear, were shot and fell back with a death shriek into the sea. Others were severely wounded by our boarding pikes, and cutlasses. Two or three of the crew were slightly injured in keeping the natives from the deck. Had the captain's orders been a moment delayed, the savages must have gained the better of us. As soon as the captain's order had been given I let go the weather main-brace. A six knot breeze was blowing and the yards having been quickly rounded, the motion was soon sufficient to embarrass the savages, and we were enabled to drive them from the ship.

"As the *Glide* moved on, we left them astern in the utmost confusion. Their situation was truly pitiable. The sun had set; there was a heavy sea, and the wind was freshening. They were five miles from their island. Some were swimming about hither and thither to recover their canoes which had been upset by the ship's progress; some went soon to the bottom, and others who had gained their canoes sat hideously bemoaning the desolation around them. Their eyes rolled wildly as they hurled their spears toward the ship, and they howled and gnashed their teeth like so many fiends of darkness. We passed within a mile of the island, and observed numerous fires kindled along the shore, probably as beacons to guide back the natives who had attacked us."

Captain Archer's ship filled her hold with beche-de-mer and took it to Manila, returning to the Fijis for a second cargo. Arriving once more at the island of Overlau, the first and third officers with part of the crew were sent in a boat to Lakamba, an island twenty-five miles distant to conduct the traffic in beche-de-mer. Because of shoal water the ship could not follow them and she carried on a trade at her anchorage in tortoise shell and sandal wood. "Knowing that on the completion of our second cargo," reads the journal, "we were to leave the Fijis the party at Lakamba worked with zeal. The men aboard ship were no less industrious. The armorer and his mate manufactured knives, chisels, and other cutlery for exchange. The carpenter was busy at his bench. Above some were repairing the rigging; on deck others were mending sails, and making matting bags to pack beche-de-mer. The sun shone not on a more faithful crew. The captain traded with the natives when they came alongside, and directed all matters aboard. Thus prosperously passed several weeks.

"We were frequently visited by David Whepley, the American chieftain at Overlau; sometimes accompanied by two or three

of his warriors. He was usually dressed as a sailor and had with him a loaded rifle whose good qualities were the main topic of his conversation. He also told us much concerning his singular life, and his adopted people, over whom he seemed to have great influence owing to his superior wisdom, and the good terms existing between him and the powerful king of Bou. The king of Bou sometimes visited us. When this old chief, whose complexion was darkness visible out of which peered two deep-set glaring eyeballs with a grizzly beard tapering to a point a foot below his chin, came alongside in his large double canoe, the spectacle was impressive. This canoe was of curious and imposing structure, able to hold a hundred or more persons, with a triangular matting sail as large as the *Glide's* main-topsail. He was accompanied by forty or fifty vigorous black warriors, huge but symmetrical in build, with elegant white turbans on their heads, and ornaments hanging from their ears. They were girt with some white tapas, and held massive clubs and spears which they use with terrible effect.

"One morning about forty of the savages of Overlau brought some fruit off the ship, ostensibly for trade. Only two or three of them were allowed to come on board at a time. Nine or ten of the crew were variously occupied in different parts of the ship. The armorer and myself were at work together on the forecastle. In a short time our suspicions were excited by seeing our visitors engaged in close conversation among themselves, and counting the men, '*Rua*, *Tolo*, *Va*, *Leema*, *Ono*, *Vetu*,' etc. (one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, etc.). The armorer was going aft to inform the captain of the circumstances when our second officer, on looking over the ship's side, saw some savages busily passing up weapons to others standing in the channels. The men aloft, having also perceived this manoevre, hurried down on deck and discharged a volley of musketry over the heads of the visitors which dispersed them.

Some leaped into the sea, others into their canoes, and swam or paddled ashore in great consternation."

But the company of the *Glide* were not to escape scot-free from the hostility of the Fijians. A few days after the foregoing incident, the second officer, carpenter, and six of the foremast hands were sent ashore to cut an anchor-stalk of timber. As usual, the boat was well supplied with arms and ammunition. A boy of the party was left in charge of the boat on the beach, and the others went into the nearest woods. Presently a score of natives appeared and tried to trade, but the sailors were too busy to deal with them, whereupon they sauntered off to the beach and began to annoy the lad who had been left behind. Before long they were stealing articles from the boat and the young sentinel raised an alarm.

"The men hearing the cry were making for the boat," relates the diarist of the *Glide*, "when the savages in a body rushed towards them. Our sailors, levelling their loaded muskets, retreated backward to the beach, avoiding with great difficulty the clubs and spears hurled at them. Thus all but two reached the boat. One of these as he came down to the water's edge, imprudently discharged his musket, and was instantly attacked and overpowered. He succeeded in throwing himself into the water, and after swimming a few strokes was seen to lift his head streaming with blood, and with his hand beckon feebly for the boat which, amidst the excitement, had been shoved off into deep water. He was followed by the savages, again attacked, dragged ashore and slain. The other unfortunate man rushed from the woods, hewing his way with the butt of his musket through the crowd of savages and fell dead on the beach.

"Whilst the crew on board was busily engaged in washing decks, the fearful war-cry of the natives fell upon our ears. David Whepley, who was sitting with some members of his

tribe upon the taffrail, cried out, 'There is trouble with your shipmates ashore.' Seeing the flash and hearing the report of the musket, I ran aft to give the alarm to Captain Archer who hastened on deck and after scanning the beach with the glass, ordered a boat away in which Whepley himself went.

"Our feeling may be imagined as we went over the ship's side and watched in silence the first boat making towards us, having on board only six of the eight men who had left the ship. Who had been left behind we knew not, until on a nearer approach one of the crew exclaimed: 'I do not see Derby or Knight.'*

"The lifeless bodies of the two men were found by the second boat's company lying on the beach stripped of their clothing and dreadfully mangled. They were wrapped in garments, brought on board and laid out upon the quarterdeck. About eleven o'clock of the same day they were committed to the care of David Whepley, who carried them to his end of the island and buried them. Although no funeral services were formally held, yet in the hearts of all that looked upon the dead, and walked the deck in sadness, were solemn thoughts of death and earnest hopes that this severe and unexpected stroke might influence for good our after lives."

Not long after this tragedy the *Glide* sailed for the island of Miambooa, which was destined to be the scene of her loss. The story of the wreck and the experience of the survivors among a tribe of singularly friendly Fijis seems worthy a place in the history of Salem seafarers.

"Every boat load of beche-de-mer that came off from the shore (at Miambooa)," runs the story, "was greeted with joy,

* Joshua Derby and Enoch Knight, both of Salem. By a most extraordinary coincidence, this Enoch Knight's brother, who was first officer of the ship *Friendship* of Salem, Captain Endicott, was killed in the same month of the same year by the natives of Qualah Battoo on the coast of Sumatra when the vessel was captured by Malay savages.

for it added something to the cargo which was fast being completed. Friendly relations existed between the natives and ourselves, so that the trade was undisturbed. The ship was in good order and we were almost ready to leave the islands. At evening the officers walked the quarterdeck with lighter step, and the crew, well and happy, assembled upon the forecastle which resounded with their mirth and songs. One of these songs was 'Home Sweet Home,' and under a clear starlit sky, enjoying after hard work the grateful ocean breeze, the inspiring chorus of this song burst forth from our hearts, and recalled to memory long past and distant scenes. Our shipmates ashore also caught our pealing chorus as it floated over the still water to their ears and they sent it back to the ship like an echo.

"On March 31, (1831), the sky began to lower, and sudden gusts of wind blowing violently down the high land which eastward overhangs the town of Bonne Rarah, caused the ship to careen and gave token of a coming storm. The signal guns at their usual hour announced 'all's well,' but in the gloomy light the wind increased to hurricane force and after making a gallant fight of it the *Glide* dragged her anchors and was driven on a reef. The crew got ashore in daylight, but after being twenty-two months absent from port, was wrecked the *Glide*, one of the stateliest ships that ever sailed from Salem."

"Among those who left the ship in the same party with me," wrote our survivor, "was a young man who communicated to me some interesting particulars of his life. His name was William Carey. He had sailed, some years before, from Nantucket in the whale-ship *Oreno*, which was wrecked near Turtle Island, one of the Fijis. The officers and crew escaped from the wreck, but Carey, noticing a disturbance between his shipmates and the natives, concealed himself, fearing the issue. He remained in safe seclusion two or three days, not venturing to go out lest he should suffer what he supposed to be and *what*

*was*, the fate of his companions, and he stealthily crept from his concealment in search of food. He was seen by a native, and, conscious of being discovered, he seated himself on a rock, and turning his back toward the savage, awaited the result in powerless despair. The native approached him, bade him rise and conducted him to the Boore.* The natives held an animated conference at which it was decided to spare his life, and he was taken by the chief into his family, and ever afterwards well provided for and kindly treated.

"Several years after the loss of the *Oreno*, the Salem ship *Clay*, Captain Vanderford, of Salem, arrived at the same island. Carey's acquaintance with the language and customs of the natives enabled him to render important services in the way of trade. After the departure of the *Clay* from the islands Carey shipped on board the brig *Quill*, Captain Kinsman of Salem. With this vessel he remained until her cargo was completed when he was induced to take a berth in the *Glide*. Thus was he twice wrecked at the Fijis, and twice subjected to a residence among the savages without meanwhile visiting home.

"In the course of two or three days after the wreck of the *Glide*, the king permitted a part of the crew with several natives to go off to the ship to get the salt provisions and bread. Fifty or sixty savages were ransacking the wreck in every part, stripping the rigging from the spars, unhinging the cabin doors, hacking timber to extract nails and spikes, beating in barrels and hogsheads, dragging up our chests from the forecastle, jabbering all the while like monkeys yet working with the steady gravity of old caulkers. The sight was painful, yet their eagerness to outdo each other in securing booty was amusing.

"In my chest was a small package of letters valuable to me alone, which I was now, in my misfortune, especially desirous to keep. As I went towards the chest to get them I was repulsed

* The council-house and temple.

by a savage who raised his club over my head and bade me begone or he would slay me. '*Sah- lago, sah- senga, ne- lago, sah- moke.*' I desisted from my purpose, and in a few minutes saw my chest with every token of home in it tumbled over the ship's side.

"Our beche-de-mer about half filled the hold and by the bilging of the ship, had become a putrid mass. At the foot of the mainmast was a barrel of cast iron axes whose position the natives had somehow learned. Their desire for this tempting prize overcame their reluctance to use the only means of securing it, and down they dove into the loathsome mass at the risk of suffocation, often plunging in vain several times and crawling back on deck covered with slime. One native in diving came in contact with some mortar formed by a cask of lime that was broken by the motion of the ship. Grasping a handful he returned dripping with beche-de-mer and asked what the strange substance was. 'The white man's bread,' answered one of the crew. The native took a large mouthful which well nigh strangled him and spat it out with many wry faces and ludicrous motions amid the loud laughter of his friends.

"Soon after the complete plundering of the ship, a council respecting us was held in the Boore by the king, priests and warriors. It was told me that on the arrival of the first boat's company at Bonne Rarah, the captain was thus questioned by the king. 'Should Fijians be cast ashore among your people, how would you treat them?' 'Kindly,' was the reply. 'Then,' rejoined the king, 'I will treat you kindly. Go with your men to the Boore, and I will protect you.' Nevertheless the consultation caused us many misgivings. The king urged that our services would be very valuable in showing them the use of muskets and in repairing them, in making bullets, etc. One chief thought that we should eat too much, and hence prudently suggested our being dispatched at once. The high priest arose

to give his judgment, which was awaited with great interest. This man was very black, of monstrous size, and most unpleasant to look at. He recommended that they make hogs of us, alluding to the practice of killing these animals by blows on the head, cooking and eating them. This advice was consistent with the reputation of this priest. It was said that on the morning before the wreck of the ship, he stood outside his hut yelling and writhing. The natives declared that he shouted or bewitched the vessel ashore.

"After much discussion the better counsel of the king prevailed. The decision was made known to us all by natives who ran and embraced us crying '*Samboolоa booloa papalangi.*' (The white men will not be hurt.)

"Soon after the breaking up of the council the king as a reassurance of his favor, returned to us a few of our belongings. His method of distribution showed either his supreme contempt for maritime rank or a great error in valuation, for whilst to the crew generally he gave garments or other things very needful and acceptable, upon Captain Archer he bestowed with the utmost dignity and condescension a wornout chart and a useless fragment of an old flannel shirt. The interest of the king in our welfare constantly showed itself during our three months' residence at Bonne Rarah. Almost daily he looked in upon us to learn our wants, and kept in his house for our sole use quantities of tea, coffee and tobacco, which he distributed to us as need required. If we met him in our walks about the village the salutations '*sah-andra, touronga-lib,*' (welcome king), '*sah-andra papalangi,*' (welcome white man), were amicably exchanged. There was withal about him a dignity which well comported with his kingly character, and showed that any violations of loyalty on the part of the natives or of due respect on ours would not go unpunished.

"On the 28th of March, Captain Archer, Carey and two or

three of our men sailed in our boat by the king's consent, to the island of Bou, the capital of the Fijis. This, our first separation, though on many accounts painful, was prudently planned, as a vessel was rumored to be in the vicinity of Bou. After exchanging farewells and cheers of mutual encouragement they started on their perilous adventure of sailing two hundred miles in a small boat, exposed to many dangers, and, not the least, attacks from savages.

"The singular use made of our clothing by the natives was often ludicrous. Some wore our jackets buttoned down behind, others had on our trousers wrong side before; one little fellow strutted along in a ruffled shirt which had belonged to one of the officers, the ruffles flaring on his back. Amongst the booty from the ship were many casks of powder, of whose explosive nature the natives had little knowledge. In one dwelling which we visited were a large number of kegs of powder promiscuously placed on the floor, in the centre of which a fire was kindled. The family was cooking their usual food, loose powder was scattered about, and the proprietor himself, dressed in a sailor's jacket and with a Scotch cap on his head, sat on a keg of powder before the fire, composedly smoking his pipe. We were somewhat amazed at the sight. Indeed it may be doubted whether Damocles himself (whose famous sword has become much blunted by its frequent use in illustration) had more cause to be ill at ease at his feast than we had while paying our native friend the civilities of the season. Our visit was not protracted and we took leave before the dinner in preparation was ready to be eaten.

"Occasionally we invited the king to share our provisions with us. Whenever he was graciously pleased to accept the invitation he brought with him a chair, plate, knife and fork (which he had obtained from the ship), and after seating himself with becoming dignity, grasped the knife in his left hand at

such an angle that as soon as one piece of food entered his mouth two fell back upon his plate. He also used his fork as a toothpick, thus confirming the notion that this practice comports better with the manners of savage than of civilized life.

"An odd volume of Shakespeare saved from the wreck, moved us to get up a dramatic entertainment, the subject of which was the voyage of the *Glide*. The play began with the captain engaged in shipping a crew at a sailor's boarding house, and holding forth all those eloquent attractions usually set off by this class of men. Following this scene were various mishaps of the voyage. The king and a crowd of natives were seated before us on mats, and paid wondering attention, at a loss to understand most of our sayings and doings until in the course of the play, our arrival at the Fijis was pictured. The trafficking and haggling with the natives was mimicked by an officer, playing the part of a Fijian, and a common sailor as the trading master. Our drift was more clearly comprehended now, and the progress of the action more eagerly watched. And when the efforts of the natives to cheat us were baffled, the sense of the whole matter flashed upon the audience, and the Boore resounded with an uproar of savage delight. Through the remainder of the play, involving the wreck and our hospitable reception by the king, to whom and his people many compliments were paid by the actors, we were followed with intense interest, and at the close by expressions of royal satisfaction."

The life of these islanders, as enjoyed by the crew of the *Glide* was a kind of tropical idyl, and the white trader had not yet blighted them with rum and disease. Our sailor narrator wrote of this Eden into which he was cast by a kindly fate: "One day, I was invited by a chief, whom I had frequently visited, to accompany him on an excursion to the interior of the island. We passed through a defile of the mountains, and then struck into a well-beaten path leading through a rather

uneven region. The beautiful diversity of prospect from the higher portions of our course, the mild air of the delightful day, birds of brilliant plumage singing in the trees about us, the ripe and grateful fruit easily procured, patches of sugar cane here and there pleasant to see and taste, agreeable conversation, and the kind civilities of natives whom we met, made our walk the source of intense and various enjoyment.

"At sunset, we reached our journey's end, a small village of about thirty rudely constructed huts, and were heartily welcomed by the chief of the tribe, who conducted us to his house, and soon set before us a repast of baked pig, fruit and vegetables. In the evening, about twenty natives, invited by our host, assembled, among whom were several that I had seen on board the ship, and who recognized me with apparent delight. A general conversation was held, relating, beside many other topics, to the lost ship, the white men and their country, throughout which it was gratifying to observe mutual kindness and courtesy prevailed. The social party was highly interesting, occasionally enlivened with good-humored mirth.

"In the morning we visited the Boore, which was similarly constructed, though in every respect inferior, to that at Bonne Rarah. In the centre of the apartment, where we held the religious ceremonies, which were about to commence when we reached the building, was a very large bowl of *angona* or *avaroot*, of which, after being properly prepared, all the natives assembled repeatedly partook, the intervals between the potations being occupied by the priest pronouncing certain forms of speech, to which the audience who were seated around the apartment, now and then responded. Near the door were arranged in open sight, several small, round blocks of wood, singularly ornamented with sennit and carved work, to which the natives, as they came in and retired, made low obeisance. As usual, no females were present. After the conclusion of the service,

which held an hour, we rambled about the village, being kindly welcomed wherever we called; and, at length, returned to the house of the hospitable chief, whence, having partaken of another ample feast, and thanked our host for his kind attention, we departed for Bonne Rarah. My excursion surprised both me and my shipmates, to whom I gave an account of it, for we had previously heard much said of the ferocity of the inland savages.

"In the latter part of April, a festival which we were kindly invited to attend, was held at a village about forty miles from Bonne Rarah. As the place, though on the island of Tacanova, was easiest of access by sailing, my shipmates, it was determined, should accompany the king in his double canoe; and I went with the chief with whom I had made the inland excursion, in his single canoe. My patron I found to be very loquacious, for, instead of our holding a pleasant conversation together, he took upon himself to give me a lecture of what was to be expected at the coming festival, diversifying his discourse with '*solib*,' grand feast; '*leebo, leebo*,' great, great; '*benacka, benacka*,' good, good; '*mungety-leelo*,' plenty of provisions; '*pookah*,' pigs; '*ouvie*,' yams; '*aooto*,' bread-fruit; '*boondy*,' plantains, all which expressions, of course, deeply impressed my imagination. Now and then he asked, whether I comprehended what he said. Whatever was my response, he was none the less talkative, for when he questioned me, '*sah gala guego*,' do you understand? if I answered '*sah- senga*,' no, he labored long and hard to make his meaning clear to my mind; and, if my reply was '*sah gala qu ow*,' 'I do understand,' he took courage from the honest confession, and at once proceeded to give me more information.

"Soon after sunset, having landed at a small island midway between Bonne Rarah and the place to which we were bound, we were well received by the natives, who conducted us to

their Boore, near the top of a high hill, and presently furnished us with a generous repast. Here, in less than an hour, the report of our arrival drew together many savages, from whose evident astonishment, as they gazed upon me, I conjectured that most of them had never seen a white man. Though we were kindly invited to spend the night here, yet the curiosity of the natives made them reluctant to retire from the Boore, and leave us to sleep. Our singular situation, exposure to attacks from savages, over whom kindness and ferocity hold rule by turns, and a consciousness of our almost complete helplessness in such a case, occasioned in me unquiet feelings, which, in truth, were not allayed by my dear friend, the cannibal-chief, who frequently started up from his mat in great excitement, and paced rapidly to and fro, with his war-club at his side. The chief, at length, explained his singular conduct by telling me that the savages designed to detain me on their island, and that he had been anxiously devising some way to defeat their purpose. At his suggestion, early in the morning, before the natives were stirring, we silently left the Boore. I placed myself on the chief's broad shoulders, and held in one hand his war-club, and in the other his canoe-paddle. Thus we stole softly down the steep hill, and when we came to the beach, to our amazement, our canoe was no where to be seen. The chief in the height of his vexation, brandished his club towards the Boore, and poured forth a torrent of imprecation. Fearful that his wild anger would soon arouse the natives, I looked about for the canoe, and after careful search, found it secreted in a thicket near the shore. We dragged it with difficulty to the water, hoisted our three-cornered sail, and unmolested sailed away from the island.

"The sun had just risen, when we reached the landing-place, about a mile from the spot chosen for the festival. We were among the first comers. On the glittering waves at some

distance, we saw hundreds of canoes, some boldly advancing on the open sea, others more wary keeping nearer the shore, and others now and then emerging into sight from behind points of land and small islands, all bound, with their shouting crews, for the general feast. They soon drew nearer and companies of natives from neighboring islands and remote villages of Tacanova, landed, in quick succession, at the beach, and made the hills echo with their loud rejoicing.

"The plain selected for the feast was of many acres, covered with liveliest verdure, surrounded by groves in which were many fruit trees, and through it coursed brooks of pure water from adjacent highlands. In its centre was a pyramid, apparently eight feet square at the base, and tapering fifteen feet to a point of yams; and near it was a smaller one, of *angona* root. Hanging from gnarled branches of ironwood trees, in another part of the field, were large quantities of plantains, cocoanuts and bread-fruit. At one end were several pens, filled with swine, of which there were at least a hundred, while the men, profusely annointed with cocoanut oil, decorated with garlands of beads and flowers, having on their heads very large white turbans and around their waists elegant *maros*, were proudly strutting about the place, displaying their fashionable attire; and the women were meekly and laboriously cooking food.

"After the completed preparation, the different tribes of the numerous assemblage arranged themselves on the grass in semicircles, about ten paces in front of which were seated their respective king, chiefs and priests, and between these dignitaries and the people were placed their appointed provisions. The tribes all first drank *angona*, and then, four or five natives, who attended each tribe as waiters, began dividing the food, and another taking on a plantain leaf a parcel of it, advanced to the master of the feast for the division, and asked 'quotha,' (for whom), when the name of some one being spoken aloud, the

person thus designated clapped his hands to make known his position, and, being at once supplied with his portion, began eating it with strips of bamboo sharpened on one edge and pointed. This ceremony was repeated until all received their shares, reference being made to rank in the order of distribution.

"In the afternoon two or three hundred young females, wearing girdles of variegated grass and leaves, and necklaces of colored beads and flowers, danced with liveliest and modest mien across the plain, loudly singing and waving beautiful fans over their heads with easy uniformity and grace; and then adroitly wheeling about, retraced their way, with fans flourishing in the air, echoing song and sprightly dance.

"Next came forward a party of men, with hair frizzled in the highest style of Fijian art, tapering beards, long *tapas* of snowy native cloth, contrasting with their own swarthy color and trailing on the grass, their arms and faces shining with cocoanut oil, carrying their stout and polished war-clubs; and, having arranged themselves in two divisions, a pace apart, in open distance, they raised with united voices a piercing war song, in time with which all made the same impressive gestures. Now they bent back their bodies, elevating their war-clubs in the air, in seeming preparation for attack; then, with faces of determined courage, lifting higher their shrill, fierce chorus, all leaped as one man onward, as if about to meet a furious foe; and, at last, as if they had achieved a noble victory changing to triumphal notes their yell of onset, with fiend-like grimaces they danced wildly about in a thousand intricate and changeful steps.

"Our company, being requested by several chiefs, on the second day of the festival, to amuse in our turn the assembled crowds, concluded to perform a few military manoeuvres. We chose one of us captain, recalled what we knew of soldiers' tactics, and keeping time by a whistled tune, in lack of better

accompaniment, advanced in open order, and charged bayonets; marched with muskets shouldered in lock-step and solid column; formed a hollow square, and, finally wheeled into line. All our movements were watched with eager eyes by the natives who expressed their pleasure by loud plaudits, to which, of course, like true soldiers, we gave slight heed, but with face unmoved, proceeded through the manual exercise. When the order came 'make ready—aim—fire,' one of our muskets happening to be loaded, discharged its contents over the heads of scores of seated savages, whose dismay now equalled their previous approbation. Their earnest inquiries were hardly evaded by assuring them that the piece was overcharged with powder.

"Towards evening the festival was concluded and the company began to disperse. Those who had sailed to the place, started to the shore where the canoes were secured and embarked in their little fleets in various directions. Our party sailed in pleasant company with others bound for Bonne Rarah. When we came within a few miles of this town, a burning object was discovered on the water, which, on a nearer approach, we found to be our beautiful ship to which fire had been set by the savages who had remained behind for the sake of her iron work. This was a sad conclusion to the enjoyment experienced at the festival. The satisfaction that we had felt in looking out from our lonely abode upon the hull of the *Glide* was now taken away, and we felt more than ever deprived of remembrances of home.

"A few weeks after the departure for Bou of Captain Archer, a large double canoe arrived at Bonne Rarah, from which we learned that the captain and his party were safe; that the brig *Niagara*, Capt. Brown, of Salem, had been wrecked on a reef midway between Overlau and Bou and that her crew were now staying at this latter island. Thus, the two only vessels

at the Fijis at this time were wrecked on the same day, and in the same storm; and, very remarkably, no member of either crew was afterwards slain by the natives.

"A part of the crew, with our second officer and Mr. Carey, left us on the return of this canoe to Bou, thus reducing our number to sixteen men. The separation seemed like bidding a mutual farewell for life, narrowed the circle in which our spirits were chiefly sustained by common sympathies and hopes, and deepened that feeling of loneliness which previously parting with others had occasioned. To miss a single face which we were wont to see, was deeply felt. The officers and crew of the *Glide*, once held together by duties on shipboard, and, afterwards by the still stronger community of suffering, were dispersing in various directions whilst the lot of those who went away, and of those who staid behind was enshrouded by the same cloud of dark uncertainty. Some were about to suffer many more trials before reaching home; and of the return of others to their native land there has yet been no account."

Strangely enough the journal of the wreck of the *Glide* ends in this abrupt fashion as if it were "to be continued in our next." Curious to learn in what manner the crew was rescued from its long exile in the Fijis a search was begun among the log-books of other Salem ships trading with those islands in the thirties. It was like hunting a needle in a haystack, but the mystery was uncovered by the log of the bark *Peru* of Salem, Captain John H. Eagleston. Under date of June 7th, 1831, he wrote while among the Fiji Islands:

"Visited by a double canoe with about 50 natives, and a boat from a town called Lebouka. Got 9 turtle out of the canoe, 3 for a musket. Was informed by the chiefs in the canoe of Captain Archer of ship *Glide* being cast away at Muddy-vater and Captain Brown in the *Niagara* at Bou, and that they had lost everything belonging to them. Which I had every

reason to believe as the canoe had several trunks and chests in it. Got up the boarding netting. At 3 A. M. sent the whale boat up to Bou, with the interpreter and 5 Lebouka men with a large present to the king and a letter to Captain Brown which was from his wife. People employed in putting arms in order.

"June 8—at 9 A. M. our boat returned from Bou with 2 boats in company which belonged to the Brig. Took on board Captain Brown, Captain Vandeford, officers and crew of the Brig (*Niagara*) and 2 officers and 2 men belonging to the *Glide*. Most of them belonging to Salem and in all 15. Many of them without shirts to their backs or shoes to their feet and some with a small part of a pair of trousers. On learning that Captain Archer had left Bou a few days before for Goro, he being in distress and suffering, I thought it my duty to send word to him that I was here.

"June 10th. Archer with 2 of his men came from Bou."

The whereabouts of the other men of the *Glide* being discovered in this way, they were later picked up and brought home, and their story ended happily, as it should, for they deserved fairer prospects after the ill-fortune which laid them by the heels in the Fijis as those islands were in those far away years when the white man had first found them out.

# CHAPTER XIX

## THE LAST PIRATES OF THE SPANISH MAIN

## (1832)

IN December of 1906 died Captain Thomas Fuller, the oldest shipmaster of Salem, in his ninety-fourth year. He was the survivor of an era on the sea that seems to belong with ancient history. Before 1830 he was a cabin boy in a brig of less than a hundred tons in the Cuban trade. At eighteen he was sailing to South America and Europe, and his shipmates, then in the prime of life, were veterans of the fighting privateers of the War of 1812. He lived well into the twentieth century to tell the tale of the last piracy of the Spanish Main, for he was one of the crew of the brig *Mexican*. Captured by a swarthy band of cut-throats in their "rakish, black schooner," while on a voyage to Rio Janeiro, the *Mexican* carried the period of organized piracy down to the year 1832. Six of the pirates were hanged in Boston three years later, and their punishment finished for good and all, a peril to American shipping which had preyed along the coast for two full centuries.

The *Mexican* sailed from Salem on the 29th of August, 1832, commanded by Captain John G. Butman and owned by Joseph Peabody. She was a brig of two hundred and twenty-seven tons register, with a crew of thirteen men, including able seaman Thomas Fuller, nineteen years old. There was also on board as a seaman, John Battis of Salem, who before his death many years after, wrote down his memories of the voyage at the request of his son. His story is the most complete account of

the famous piracy that has come down to us, and in part it runs as follows:

"I was at Peabody's store house on the morning of the day of sailing and others of the crew came soon after. After waiting quite a while, it was suggested that we go after the cook, Ridgely, who then boarded with a Mrs. Ranson, a colored woman living on Becket street, so we set out to find him. He was at home but disinclined to go, as he wished to pass one more Sunday home. However, after some persuading he got ready, and we all started out of the gate together. A black hen was in the yard and as we came out the bird flew upon the fence, and flapping her wings, gave a loud crow. The cook was wild with terror, and insisted that something was going to happen; that such a sign meant harm, and he ran about in search of a stone to knock out the brains of the offending biped. The poor darkey did not succeed in his murderous design, but followed us grumbling.

"At about ten o'clock we mustered all present and accounted for, and commenced to carry the specie, with which we were to purchase our return cargo, on board the brig. We carried aboard twenty thousand dollars in silver, in ten boxes of two thousand dollars each; we also had about one hundred bags of saltpetre and one hundred chests of tea. The silver was stored in the 'run' under the cabin floor, and there was not a man aboard but knew where the money was stored.

"At last everything being ready we hove anchor and stood out to sea in the face of a southeast wind. As soon as we got outside and stowed anchor we cleared ship and the captain called all hands and divided the crew into watches. I was in the first mate's watch and young Thomas Fuller was in the captain's watch. On account of the several acts of piracy previously committed on Salem ships, Captain Butman undoubtedly feared, or perhaps had a premonition of a like hap-

Captain Thomas Fuller, last survivor of the crew of the brig *Mexican*
(Died Dec., 1906)

The brig *Mexican* attacked by pirates, 1832

pening to his vessel, for the next day while he was aft at work on the main rigging, I heard the captain and first mate talking about pirates. The captain said he would fight a long while before he'd give his money up. They had a long talk together, and he seemed to be very much worried. I think it was the next day after this conversation between Captain Butman and Mr. Reed that I was at the wheel steering when the captain came and spoke to me. He asked me how I felt about leaving home, and I replied that I felt the same as ever, 'all right.' I learned afterwards that he put this question to the rest of the crew.

"We sailed along without anything occurring worthy of note until the night of the nineteenth of September. After supper we were all sitting together during the dog-watch (this being between six and eight o'clock P. M.) when all seemed bent on telling pirate yarns, and of course got more or less excited. I went below at twelve o'clock and at four next morning my watch was called. Upon coming on deck the first mate came forward and said that we must keep a sharp look-out, as there was a vessel 'round, and that she had crossed our stern and gone to the leeward. I took a seat between the knight-heads, and had been sitting there but a few minutes when a vessel crossed our bows, and went to the windward of us.

"We were going at a pretty good rate at the time. I sang out and the mate came forward with a glass, but said he could not make her out. I told him he would see her to the windward at daylight. At dawn we discovered a top-sail schooner about five miles off our weather quarter, standing on the wind on the same tack we were. The wind was light, at south southwest, and we were standing about southeast. At seven o'clock the captain came on deck and this was the first he knew of the schooner being about us.

"I was at the wheel when the captain came out of the cabin;"

he looked toward the schooner, and as soon as he perceived her, he reached and took his glass and went into the main-top. He came down and closing his glass, said: 'That is the very man I've been looking for. I can count thirty men on his deck.' He also said that he saw one man on her fore-top-gallant yard, looking out, and that he was very suspicious of her. He then ordered us to set all sail (as the schooner didn't seem to sail very fast), thinking we might get away from her.

"While I was up loosing the main-royal I sat on the yard, and let them hoist me up to the truck so that I could have a good look around. I saw another vessel, a brig, to the eastward of us, way ahead and reported it. The schooner had in the meanwhile sailed very fast, for when I started in to come down she was off our beam. From all appearances and her manner of sailing we concluded afterwards that she had a drag out. We then went to breakfast, the schooner kept ahead of us, and appeared to be after the other vessel. Then the captain altered the brig's course, tacking to the westward, keeping a little off from the wind to make good way through the water to get clear of her if possible. After breakfast when we came on deck the schooner was coming down on us under a full press of sail. I noticed two kegs of powder alongside our two short carronades, the only guns we had. Our means of defense, however, proved utterly worthless, as the shot was a number of sizes too large for the gun.

"A few moments before this, the schooner had fired a shot at us to heave to, which Captain Butman was on the point of doing as I came on deck. The schooner then hoisted patriotic colors (Columbian flag), backed her main top-sail, and laid to about half a mile to the windward. She was a long, low, straight top-sail schooner of about one hundred and fifty tons burthen, painted black with a narrow white streak, a large figure-head with a horn of plenty painted white; masts raked

aft, and a large main-top-mast, a regular Baltimore clipper. We could not see any name. She carried thirty or more men, with a long thirty-two pound swivel amidships, with four brass guns, two on each side.

"A hail came in English from the schooner, asking us where we were from and where bound and what our cargo was. Captain Butman replied 'tea and salt-petre.' The same voice from the schooner then hailed us for the captain to lower a boat and come alongside and bring him his papers. The boat was got ready and Captain Butman and four men—Jack Ardissone, Thomas Fuller, Benjamin Larcom and Fred Trask—got in and pulled to the schooner. When they started Captain Butman shook hands with the mate, Mr. Reed, and told him to do the best he could if he never saw him again.

"The *Mexican's* boat pulled up to the gangway of the schooner but they ordered it to go to the forechains where five of the pirates jumped into our boat, not permitting any of our men to go on board the schooner and pushed off, ordering the captain back to the brig. They were armed with pistols in their belts and long knives up their sleeves. While at the schooner's side, after getting into our boat, one of the pirates asked their captain in Spanish what they should do with us, and his answer was: 'Dead cats don't mew—have her thoroughly searched, and bring aboard all you can—you know what to do with them.' The orders of the captain of the schooner being in Spanish, were understood by only one of the *Mexican's* crew then in the boat, namely Ardissone, who burst into tears, and in broken English declared that all was over with them.

"It was related by one of our crew that while the *Mexican's* boat was at the forechains of the schooner, the brig before mentioned was plainly seen to the eastward, and the remark was made to Thomas Fuller that it would be a good thing to shove off and pull for the other vessel in sight, to which proposi-

tion Fuller scornfully answered 'I will do no such things. I will stay and take my chances with the boys.'

"Our boat returned to the brig and Captain Butman and the five pirates came on board; two of them went down in the cabin with us, and the other three loafed around on deck. Our first mate came up from the cabin and told us to muster aft and get the money up. Luscomb and I, being near the companion-way, started to go down into the cabin when we met the boat-swain of the pirate coming up, who gave the signal for attack. The three pirates on deck sprang on Luscomb and myself, striking at us with the long knives across our heads. A Scotch hat I happened to have on with a large cotton handkerchief inside, saved me from a severe wounding as both were cut through and through. Our mate, Mr. Reed, here interfered and attempted to stop them from assaulting us whereupon they turned on him.

"We then went down into the cabin and into the run; there were eight of us in all; six of our men then went back into the cabin, and the steward and myself were ordered to pass the money up which we did, to the cabin floor, and our crew then took it and carried it on deck. In the meantime, the pirate officer in charge (the third mate) had hailed the schooner and told them they had found what they were looking for. The schooner then sent a launch containing sixteen men, which came alongside and they boarded us. They made the crew pass the boxes of money down into the boat, and it was then conveyed on board the pirate.

"The launch came back with about a dozen more men, and the search began in earnest. Nine of them rushed down into the cabin where the captain, Jack Ardissone, and myself were standing. They beat the captain with their long knives, and battered a speaking trumpet to pieces over his head and shoulders. Seeing we could do nothing, I made a break to reach the

deck by jumping out of the cabin window, thinking I could get there by grasping hold of the boat's davits and pulling myself on deck. Jack Ardissone, divining my movement, caught my foot as I was jumping and saved me, as I should probably have missed my calculation and gone overboard. Jack and I then ran and the pirates after both of us, leaving the captain whom they continued to beat and abuse, demanding more money. We ran into the steerage. Jack, not calculating the break of the deck, soon went over into the hold and I on top of him. For some reason the pirates gave up the chase before they reached the break between the decks, or they would have gone down with us. By the fall Jack broke two of his ribs. Under deck we had a clean sweep, there being no cargo, so we could go from one end of the vessel to the other.

"The crew then got together in the forecastle and stayed there. We hadn't been there long before the mate, Mr. Reed, came rushing down, chased by the boatswain of the pirate, demanding his money. The mate then told Luscomb to go and get his money, which he had previously given Luscomb to stow away for him in some safe place; there were two hundred dollars in specie, and Luscomb had put it under the wood in the hold. Luscomb went and got it, brought it up and gave it to the pirate, who untied the bag, took a handful out, retied the bag, and went up on deck and threw the handful of money overboard so that those on the schooner could see that they had found more money.

"Then the pirates went to Captain Butman and told him that if they found any more money which we hadn't surrendered, they would cut all our throats. I must have followed them into the cabin, for I heard them tell the captain this. Previous to this, we of the crew found that we had about fifty dollars, which we secured by putting into the pickle keg, and this was secretly placed in the breast-hook forward. On hearing this

threat made to the captain I ran back and informed the crew what I had heard, and we took the money out of my keg and dropped it down the air-streak, which is the space between the inside and outside planking. It went way down into the keelson. Our carpenter afterwards located its exact position and recovered every cent of it. Strange to say the first thing they searched on coming below was the pickle keg. The search of our effects by the pirates was pretty thorough, and they took all new clothes, tobacco, etc. In the cabin they searched the captain's chest, but failed to get at seven hundred dollars which he had concealed in the false bottom; they had previously taken from him several dollars which he had in his pocket, and his gold watch, and had also relieved the mate of his watch.

"About noon it appeared to be very quiet on deck, we having been between decks ever since the real searching party came on board. We all agreed not to go on deck again and to make resistance with sticks of wood if they attempted to come down, determined to sell our lives as dearly as possible. Being somewhat curious, I thought I'd peep up and see what they were doing; as I did so, a cocked pistol was pressed to my head, and I was ordered to come on deck and went, expecting to be thrown overboard. One took me by the collar and held me out at arm's length to plunge a knife into me. I looked him right in the eye and he dropped his knife and ordered me to get the doors of the forecastle which were below. I went down and got them, but they did not seem to understand how they were to be used, and they made me come up and ship them. There were three of them and as I was letting the last one in I caught the gleam of a cutlass being drawn, so taking the top of the door on my stomach, I turned a quick somersault and went down head first into the forecastle. The cutlass came down, but did not find me; it went into the companionway quite a depth.

Then they hauled the slide over and fastened it, and we were all locked below.

"They fastened the aft companionway leading down into the cabin, locking our officers below as well. From noises that came from overhead, we were convinced that the pirates had begun a work of destruction. All running rigging, including tiller ropes, was cut, sails slashed into ribbons, spars cut loose, ship's instruments and all movable articles on which they could lay their hands were demolished, the yards were tumbled down and we could hear the main-boom swinging from side to side. They then, as appears by later developments, filled the caboose or cook's galley, with combustibles, consisting of tar, tarred rope-yarn, oakum, etc., setting fire to the same, and lowered the dismantled mainsail so that it rested on top of the caboose.

"In this horrible suspense we waited for an hour or more when all became quiet save the wash of the sea against the brig. All this time the crew had been cooped up in the darkness of the forecastle, of course unable to speculate as to what would be the next move of the enemy, or how soon death would come to each and all of us.

"Finally at about three o'clock in the afternoon, Thomas Fuller came running forward and informed us that the pirates were leaving the ship. One after another of the crew made their way to the cabin and on peering out of the two small stern windows saw the pirates pulling for the schooner. Captain Butman was at this time standing on the cabin table, looking out from a small skylight, the one means of egress the pirates had neglected to fasten. We told him that from the odor of smoke, we believed they had fired the brig. He said he knew it and ordered us to remain quiet. He then stepped down from the table and for several moments knelt in prayer, after which he calmly told us to go forward and he would call us when he wanted us.

"We had not been in the forecastle long before he called us back, and directed that we get all buckets under deck and fill them with water from casks in the hold. On our return he again opened the skylight and drew himself up on deck. We then handed him a small bucket of water, and he crept along the rail in the direction of the caboose, keeping well under the rail in order to escape observation from the schooner. The fire was just breaking through the top of the caboose when he arrived in time to throw several handfuls of water on top so as to keep it under. This he continued to do for a long time, not daring to extinguish it immediately lest the pirates should notice the absence of smoke and know that their plan for our destruction had been frustrated.

"When the fire had been reduced to a reasonable degree of safety, he came and opened the aft companionway and let us all up. The schooner, being a fast sailer, was in the distance about hull down. The fire in the caboose was allowed to burn in a smouldering condition for perhaps a half-hour or more, keeping up a dense smoke. By this time the pirate schooner was well nigh out of sight, or nearly topsails under, to the eastward. On looking about us, we found the *Mexican* in a bad plight, all sails, halyards and running gear were cut, headsails dragging in the water, and on account of the tiller ropes being cut loose, the brig was rolling about in the trough of the sea. We at once set to work repairing damages as speedily as possible and before dark had bent new sails and repaired our running gear to a great extent.

"Fortunately through the shrewdness and foresight of Captain Butman, our most valuable ship instruments, compass, quadrant, sextant, etc., had escaped destruction. It seems that immediately on discovering the true character of the stranger, he had placed them in the steerage and covered them with a quantity of oakum. This the pirates somehow overlooked in

their search, although they passed and repassed it continually during their visit.

"The brig was then put before the wind, steering north, and as by the intervention of Divine Providence, a strong wind came up, which before dark developed into a heavy squall with thunder and lightning, so we let the brig go before the fury of the wind, not taking in a stitch of canvas. We steered north until next morning, when the brig's course was altered, and we stood due west, tacking off and on several courses for a day or two, when finally a homeward course was taken which was kept up until we reached Salem, October 12, 1832."

Thus ends the narrative of able seaman, John Battis. If the valor of Captain Butman and his crew be questioned, in that they made no resistance, it must be remembered that they were under the guns of the pirate which could have sunk the *Mexican* at the slightest sign of trouble aboard the brig. And although the decks of the *Mexican* were not stained with the slaughter of her crew, it is certain that her captors expected to burn them alive. These nineteenth century pirates were not a gentle brood, even though they did not always make their victims walk a plank. In 1829, only three years before the capture of the *Mexican*, the brig *New Priscilla* of Salem was found apparently abandoned within a day's sail of Havana. The boarding party from the ship that sighted her found a boy of Salem, a lad in his teens, spiked to the deck, an act of wanton torture committed after every other soul on board had been thrown overboard.

The capture of the pirates of the *Mexican* was an extraordinary manifestation of the long arm of Justice. A short time after the return of the brig to Salem, the ship *Gleaner* sailed for the African coast. Her commander, Captain Hunt happened to carry with him a copy of the *Essex Register* which under a date of October, 1832, contained the statement of

Captain Butman in which he described in detail the model, rig and appearance of the pirate schooner. Captain Hunt perused the statement with lively interest and without doubt kept a weather eye out for a rakish black schooner with a white streak, as he laid his course to the southward. He touched at the island of St. Thomas and while at anchor in the harbor saw a topsail schooner come in from seaward. The stranger anchored near-by, and Captain Hunt sat on his quarter-deck with a copy of the *Essex Register* in his fist. The more he studied, first the journal and then the schooner, the stronger grew his suspicions that this was the sea robber which had gutted the *Mexican*. There was her "large main-top-mast, but with no yards or sail on it," "her mainsail very square at the head, sails made with split cloth and all new," and "the large gun on a pivot amidships," the brass twelve-pounders gleaming from her side, and "about seventy men who appeared to be chiefly Spaniards and mulattos."

Having digested these facts, Captain Hunt went ashore and confided in an old friend. These two invented an excuse for boarding the schooner, and there on the deck they spied two spars painted black which had been stolen from the *Mexican*. Captain Butman had told Captain Hunt about these black spars before they parted in Salem. The latter at once decided to slip his cable that night, take the *Gleaner* to sea and run down to the nearest station where he might find English war vessels. There was a leak somewhere, for just before dark, the suspicious schooner made sail and under a heavy press of canvas fled for the open sea. As she passed within hailing distance of the Gleaner a hoarse voice shouted in broken English that if he ventured to take his brig to sea that night, he and his crew would have their throats slitted before daylight.

Captain Hunt stayed in harbor, but his chagrin was lightened when he saw a British frigate come in almost before the schooner

had sailed beyond sight. Manning a boat he hurried aboard the frigate, and told her commander what he knew about the *Mexican* and what he more than guessed about the rakish schooner. The frigate put about and made sail in chase but the pirate eluded her in the night and laid a course for the African coast.

Shortly after this, the British war brig *Curlew*, Captain Henry D. Trotter, was cruising on the west coast of Africa, and through the officers of the frigate which had chased the pirate out off St. Thomas, she received the story of the *Mexican* and a description of the schooner. Captain Trotter cogitated and recalled the appearance of a schooner he had recently noticed at anchor in the River Nazareth on the African coast where slavers were wont to hover. The description seemed to fit so closely that the *Curlew* sailed at once to investigate. When she reached the mouth of the river, Captain Trotter with a force of forty men in boats went upstream, and pulled alongside the schooner at daybreak, ready to take her by storm. The pirates, however, scrambled into their own boats, after setting fire to their schooner and escaped to the shore where they took refuge in the swamps and could not be found. A few days after a prize crew had been put aboard the schooner she was accidentally blown up, killing two officers and two men of the *Curlew*. The mysterious rakish schooner therefore vanishes from the story with a melodramatic finale.

The stranded pirates meantime had sought the protection of a native king, who promised to surrender them when the demand came from Captain Trotter. After much difficulty, four of the pirates were taken in this region. Five more were captured after they had fled to Fernando Po, and the vigilance of the British navy swelled the list with seven more of the ruffians who were run down at St. Thomas. The pirates were first taken to England, and surrendered to the United States

Government for trial in 1834. On August twenty-seventh of that year the British brig of war *Savage* entered Salem harbor with a consignment of sixteen full-fledged pirates to be delivered to the local authorities.

There was not a British flag in Salem, and the informal reception committee was compelled to ask the British commander for an ensign which might be raised on shore in honor of the visit. The pirates were landed at Crowninshield's Wharf and taken in carriages to the Town Hall. Twelve of them, all handcuffed together, were arraigned at the bar for examination, and "their plea of not guilty was reiterated with great vociferation and much gesticulation and heat." One of them, Perez, had confessed soon after capture, and his statement was read. The *Pinda*, for so the schooner was named, had sailed from Havana with the intention of making a slaving voyage to Africa. When twenty days out they fell in with an American brig (the *Mexican*), which they boarded with pistols and knives. After robbing her, they scuttled and burned an English brig, and then sailed for Africa.

"The hall was crowded to suffocation," says the Salem *Gazette* of that date, "with persons eager to behold the visages of a gang of pirates, that terror and bugbear of the inhabitants of a navigating community. It is a case, so far as we recollect, altogether without precedent to have a band of sixteen pirates placed at the bar at one time and charged with the commission of the same crime."

The sixteen pirates of the *Pinda* were taken to Boston to await trial in the United States Court. While in prison they seem to have inspired as much sympathy as hostility. In fact, from all accounts they were as mild-mannered a band of cutthroats as ever scuttled a ship. A writer in the Boston *Post*, September 2, 1834, has left these touches of personal description:

"Having heard a terrific description of the Spaniards now

confined in Leverett Street jail on a charge of piracy, we availed ourselves of our right of *entree* and took a birdseye glance at the monsters of the deep but were somewhat surprised to find them small and ordinary looking men, extremely civil and good-natured, with a free dash of humor in their conversation and easy indifference to their situation. The first in importance as well as in appearance is the Captain, Pedro Gibert, a Castilian 38 years old, and the son of a merchant. In appearance he did not come quite up to our standard for the leader of a brave band of buccaneers, although a pleasant and rather a handsome mariner."

Captain Pedro Gibert is further described as having "a round face, ample and straight nose, and a full but not fierce black eye." Francisco Ruiz the carpenter, was "only five feet three inches high, and though not very ferocious of aspect will never be hung for his good looks." Antonio Farrer, a native African had several seams on his face resembling sabre gashes. These were tattoo marks, on each cheek a chain of diamond-shaped links, and branded on the forehead to resemble an ornamental band or coronet." With a red handkerchief bound about his head Antonio must have been ferocious in action.

In October, November, 1835, the trial was begun before Justice Joseph Story and District Judge John Davis. The prisoners at the bar were Captain Gibert, Bernado de Soto, first mate; Francisco Ruiz, Nicola Costa, Antonio Ferrer, Manuel Boyga, Domingo de Guzman, Juan Antonio Portana, Manuel Castillo, Angel Garcia, Jose Velasquez, and Juan Montenegro. Manuel Delgardo was not present. He had committed suicide in the Boston jail some time before.

The pirates conducted themselves with a dignity and courage that showed them to be no mongrel breed of outlaw, and their finish was worthy of better careers. The trial lasted two weeks and the evidence, both direct and circumstantial was of the

strongest kind against seven of the pirates. Five were acquitted after proving to the satisfaction of the jury that they had not been on board the *Pinda* at the time of the *Mexican* affair. Thomas Fuller of Salem was a witness, and he upset the decorum of the court in a scandalous manner. When asked to identify the prisoners he stepped up to one of them and shouted:

"You're the scoundrel that was first over the rail and you knocked me endwise with the flat of a cutlass. Take that."

The impetuous young witness caught the prisoner on the jaw with a fist like an oaken billet and drove him spinning across the room by way of emphatic identification.

Before sentence was pronounced Captain Gibert rose and said in Spanish:

"I am innocent of the crime—I am innocent." With that he presented a statement drawn up by himself in a "remarkably well written hand" which he desired might be read. After denouncing the traitor Perez, who had turned State's evidence, the captain stated that Delgardo, before he had cut his throat in jail, had avowed his determination to commit suicide because his extorted and false confession had involved the lives of his companions. He alleged that his boatswain had been poisoned by Captain Trotter on Fernando Po for denying the robbery, and had exclaimed just before his death:

"'The knaves have given me poison. My entrails are burning,' after which he expired foaming at the mouth."

The first mate, de Soto, presented a paper addressed to the presiding "Senor," in which he protested his innocence, "before the tribunal, before the whole universe, and before the Omnipotent Being." He went on to say that he was born at Corunna where his father was an administrator of the ecclesiastical rank; that he had devoted himself to the study of navigation from the age of fourteen, and at twenty-two had "by dint of assiduity

passed successfully through his examinations and reached the grade of captain, or first pilot, in the India course. He had shortly after espoused the daughter of an old and respectable family."

(At this point the clerk, Mr. Childs became much affected, shed tears and was obliged for a time to resign the reading of the document to Mr. Bodlam.)

The memorial of Bernado de Soto closed in this wise:

"Nevertheless I say no more than that they (the witnesses) have acted on vain presumption and I forgive them. But let them not think it will be so with my parents and my friends who will cry to God continually for vengeance on those who have sacrificed my life while innocent."

Manuel Castillo, the Peruvian, "who had a noble Rolla countenance," exclaimed with upraised hands:

"I am innocent in the presence of the Supreme Being of this Assembly, and of the Universe. I swear it and I desire the court will receive my memorial."

The mate de Soto obtained a respite after telling the following story which investigation proved to be true:

He had been master of a vessel which made a voyage from Havana to Philadelphia in 1831, and was consigned to a "respectable house there." During the return voyage to Havana he discovered the ship *Minerva* ashore on one of the Bahama reefs, and on fire. The passengers and crew were clinging to the masts and yards. He approached the wreck at great danger to himself and vessel and took off seventy-two persons, whom he carried safely to Havana. He was presented with a silver cup by the insurance office at Philadelphia as token of their appreciation of his bravery and self-sacrifice. The ship *Minerva* belonged in Salem, and the records showed that the rescue performed by de Soto had been even more gallant than he pictured it to the Court. For this service to humanity he

escaped the death penalty for his later act of piracy and was subsequently pardoned by President Andrew Jackson.

When his comrades were called for sentence by Judge Story they showed the same firmness, self-possession and demeanor of innocence which had marked their conduct throughout the trial. The death sentence for the crime of piracy on the high seas was announced in these words:

"The sentence is that you and each of you, for the crime whereof you severally stand convicted, be severally decreed, taken and adjudged to be pirates and felons, and that each of you be severally hung by the neck until you be severally dead. And that the marshal of this District of Massachusetts or his Deputy, do on peril of what may fall thereon, cause execution to be done upon you and each of you severally on the 11th day of March next ensueing, between the hours of 9 and 12 of the same day; that you be now taken from hence to the jail in Boston in the District aforesaid, from whence you came; there or in some other safe and convenient jail within the District to be closely kept until the day of execution; and from thence to be taken on the day appointed for the execution as aforesaid to the place aforesaid; there to be hanged until you are severally dead. I earnestly recommend to each of you to employ the intermediate period in sober reflection upon your past life, and conduct, and by prayers and penitence and religious exercises to seek the favor of Almighty God for any sins and crimes which you may have committed. And for this purpose I earnestly recommend to you to seek the aid and assistance of the Ministers of our holy religion of the denominations of Christians to which you severally belong. And in bidding you, so far as I can presume to know, an eternal farewell, I offer up my earnest prayer that Almighty God may in his infinite goodness, have mercy on your souls."

The Salem *Gazette* records that "after the sentence was read

in English by the Judge, it was translated into Spanish. Captain Gibert did not waver a particle from his most extraordinary firmness of manner, and the commanding dignity of all his movements. The muscles of de Soto's face quivered, and he seemed subdued. Castillo looked the same high scorn with which he appears to have regarded the whole proceeding. The rest gave no particular indication of their feelings. The Judge ordered the prisoners to be remanded and they were ironed and carried out of court, the crowd assembled being much excited by this moving scene. Immediately after pronouncing the sentence Judge Story left the court, appearing deeply affected by the painful duty which he has evidently most reluctantly performed under the highest sense of responsibility."

The local chronicle thus closes the story of the piracy of the *Mexican*, six months after the trial:

"Five of the pirates, the captain and four of the crew were executed this morning at half past ten. We have already mentioned the temporary reprieve of the mate de Soto on account of rescuing the crew of an American vessel, and of Ruiz, the carpenter, on the score of insanity. They were accompanied to the gallows by a Spanish priest, but none of them made any confession or expressed any contrition. They all protested their innocence to the last. Last night Captain Gibert was discovered with a piece of glass with which he intended to commit suicide. And one of the men (Boyga) cut his throat with a piece of tin, and was so much weakened by loss of blood that he was supported to the gallows, and seated in a chair on the drop when it fell. It would seem from their conduct that they retained hopes of pardon to the last moment."

De Soto, the mate, who escaped the noose, returned to Cuba and was for many years in the merchant marine in those waters. More than a generation after the *Mexican* affair, a Salem shipmaster, Captain Nicholas Snell, had occasion to take

a steamer that traded between Havana and Matanzas. He had attended the trial of the pirates in Boston and he recognized the captain of the steamer as de Soto. The former buccaneer and the Salem captain became friends and before they parted de Soto related the story of the *Pinda's* voyage. He said that he had shipped aboard her at Havana where she was represented as a slaver. Once at sea, however, he discovered that the *Pinda* was a pirate, and that he must share her fortune. He frankly discussed the capture of the *Mexican*, and threw an unholy light upon the character of Captain Gibert. The night after the capture the officers of the *Pinda* were drinking recklessly in the cabin, and one of the mates held up his glass of rum and shouted: "Here's to the squirming Yankees."

The captain had taken it for granted that the crew of the *Mexican* had been killed to a man before the brig was set on fire, and when the truth came out, he was fairly beside himself. With black oaths he sprang on deck, put his vessel about, and for two days cruised in search of the *Mexican*, swearing to slay every man on board if he could overhaul her in order to insure the safety of his own precious neck. In truth, that gale with thunder and lightning before which the *Mexican* drove all that thick night was seaman John Battis' "intervention of Divine Providence."

When the word was brought to Salem that de Soto was to be found on the Cuban coast, more than one Salem skipper, when voyaging to Havana or Matanzas, took the trouble to find the former pirate and spin a yarn or two with him over a cool glass and a long, black cigar.

# CHAPTER XX

## GENERAL FREDERICK TOWNSEND WARD *

*(Leader of the Chinese "Ever Victorious Army")*

THE career of Frederick Townsend Ward flashes across the later day history of Salem like a meteor. After a youth crowded with astonishing adventure this merchant sailor and soldier of fortune became the organizer and first leader of the "Ever Victorious Army" of the Chinese Imperial forces in the Tai-ping Rebellion and was killed while storming a walled city at the head of his troops in his thirtieth year. So memorable were his services in this, the most disastrous armed conflict of modern times, that to this day his ashes which rest at Sung Kiang, are yearly honored by offerings of incense and solemn rites. A temple and a shrine mark his burial place and by an edict of their Emperor the Chinese people are commanded forever to worship and do reverence to the spirit of this foreign soldier who died ten thousand miles away from the New England seaport in which he was born and where his forefathers sleep.

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* This sketch of the life of Frederick Townsend Ward is taken for the most part, from the Essex Institute Historical Collections, Vol. XLIV, Jan. 1908, to which Hon. Robert S. Rantoul contributed a most complete and authoritative account of General Ward's family history and achievements.

In this extraordinary man were focused at white heat the spirit of high adventure and the compelling desire to seek far distant seas and play the game of life for high stakes which had made Salem famous in her golden age. Frederick Townsend Ward came of old seafaring stock which had fought and sailed through one generation after another for more than two centuries of Salem history. As far away as 1639 his ancestor, Miles Ward, had been a commissioned officer at the siege of Louisburg and had served with Wolfe at the storming of Quebec. His paternal grandfather, Gamaliel Hodges Ward, of a family of fifteen children, had one brother who served as a lieutenant in the American navy during the War of 1812 and another who was naval officer of the Port of Salem. This grandfather married Priscilla Lambert Townsend, thus uniting three strains of militant seafaring blood. Captain Moses Townsend had died in England as a prisoner of war during the Revolution, his son of fifteen sharing his captivity as a patriotic seaman. On the records of the Salem Marine Society, founded in 1766, are the names of nine Wards and three Lamberts, and among the members of the Salem East India Marine Society are to be found six Wards, six Hodges and a Townsend all of whom must have doubled Cape Horn or the Cape of Good Hope as shipmasters or supercargoes in order to qualify for admission to the Society.

The father of Frederick Townsend Ward was a shipmaster and the son born in 1831 passed his boyhood in Salem at a time when, although the world-wide commerce had begun to ebb, the old town still had its schools of navigation, its nautical instrument dealers, its shipyards and ropewalks, its East India warehouses, its sailors' lodging houses, dance halls and slop shops crowded along the water front. The wharves were still thronged with the activities of voyagers inbound from and outbound to the uttermost parts of the earth. Although the railroads had begun to build up the larger deep water ports and

to sap the life of such lesser ports as Salem, yet even in those days to be born in Salem was to be born a sailor. The harbor still knew the fleets which kept it in touch with scores of remote and romantic ports and the marvelous tales of sea-tanned sailors tempted boyhood to dream of exploring regions little known in books.

"The stick the schoolboy whittled shaped itself into a hull, a rudder, a bowsprit or a boom. When in school he drew lines on his slate to relieve the tedium of the rule of three, his sketches took form in yards and shrouds and bob-stays. Give him a box of water colors and the private signals of the East India merchants were its earliest products. If he were too little to pull a pair of oars, he sculled a dory with one, and he was no more than in breeches when he knew every ring-bolt, block and gasket from cut-water to stern-post of the East Indiamen discharging at Derby Wharf. If he could muster a few shillings, some kindly mariner took charge of them as a venture and brought him home in a twelve month or so their value trebled in nutmegs or pepper-corns or gum copal. If, on leaving school, he did not ship before the mast he tried to sail as cabin boy or ship's clerk, or supercargo.

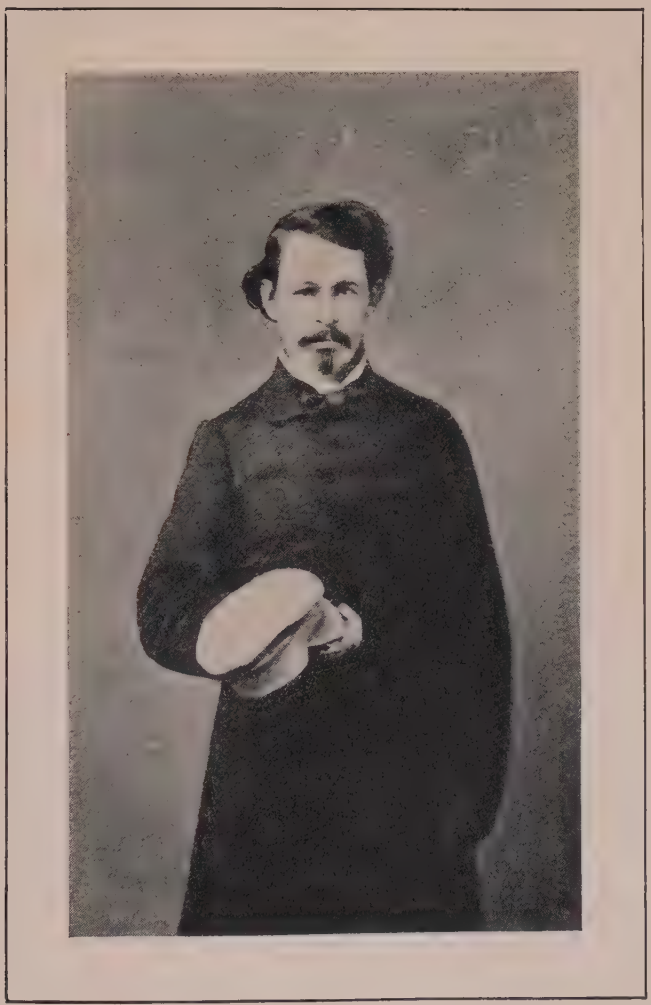
"When he had won his fight on the sea and came at last to live in comfort on shore, if he built himself a den in which to doze and smoke and read and chat, it was apt to be shaped like a ship's cabin, to have a swinging light overhead, transoms for bunks, and spyglass, compass and barometer handy. The dust and cobwebs under the eaves of his attic concealed camphor and cedar trunks stuffed with camel's hair shawls, pongee silks and seersucker suits. A log or two of sandalwood, brought home for dunnage, might sizzle on the andirons and fill his house with the spicy breath of Arabia.

"When a family returned from residence in foreign lands it was not unusual for them to bring Chinese cooks, nurse maids

and house servants. The high-bred Parsee merchant with his lofty head-dress of figured taffeta and buckram was no stranger in Salem, nor was the turbanned Indian or Arab unknown."

Such was the atmosphere in which young Frederick Townsend Ward was reared and the spirit of the place lured his daring and romantic fancy to dream of enterprises on blue water. He sailed in all kinds of small craft about Salem harbor before he was in his teens and was noted as the boldest lad and best seaman of the company of ardent friends whom he chose as his companions. He sought and found employment at sea when he was no more than fifteen years old and it sounds extraordinary in these times to learn that at this age he went out on his first voyage as second mate of the clipper ship *Hamilton* bound from New York to China. This stripling mate of fifteen years was placed in a position of authority over his watch of rugged forecastle hands, some of whom had been going to sea before he was born. Young Ward's father was known as a stern disciplinarian of the quarterdeck, and the son won a reputation for the same quality of resourceful manhood. His captain found him to be a smart, efficient and capable officer and so reported him to the owners of the ship. At eighteen years of age he was first mate of the ship *Russell Glover* commanded by his father, on a voyage from New York to San Francisco. In the latter port the ship was laid up for a long time and young Ward was kept on board as ship-keeper. His impetuous temperament could not long endure such monotony as this and it was at San Francisco that he forsook the sea for a time to lose himself in a haze of stormy adventures as a soldier of fortune in Spanish American countries. It is known that during this period he gained the friendship of Garibaldi, who for eleven years previous to 1848 had been fighting in behalf of the revolutionary cause of Brazil.

In 1851, at the age of twenty, the family records show that Ward was sailing as first mate of a bark from San Francisco to



Frederick T. Wards

Shanghai where he left the ship and took a berth for a short time, on board one of the vessels moored in the river to prevent opium smuggling. In the following year he appears in the American merchant service once more as first mate of the ship *Gold Hunter* from Shanghai to Tehuantepec.

Upon reaching Nicaragua his restless temperament must have impelled him to leave the quarter-deck, for somewhat later than this he joined a filibustering expedition of William Walker. The tragic history of this attempt to found an empire in Central America need not be told in detail. If Walker had succeeded he would have been called a man of military genius and a farsighted maker of destinies. He was shot by order of a drum-head court martial at daybreak on September 3, 1860, and the shattered remnants of his force were brought home to New York in the United States ship *Wabash*.

Frederick Townsend Ward could not have remained long with Walker, however, for from Central America he made his way into Mexico and is said to have been offered a command in the Mexican army. His plans seem to have gone all wrong, for he set out penniless and alone to cross the country to lower California. Back in San Francisco once more he took a berth as first officer of the clipper ship *Westward Ho* of New York. It is claimed that between 1854 and 1856 Ward was on the Crimea as lieutenant in the French army, fighting against the Russians. His sister has related that she was at boarding school during that period and that Frederick called on her there to take his leave, as he told her, "on his way to the Crimean War," but the dates are conflicting.

This page of his life, like those immediately preceding it, is more or less vague so far as details are concerned. It is certain, however, that Frederick Townsend Ward was picking up here and there as a soldier of fortune a knowledge of men and of military matters which were to stand him in service when the

grand chance offered. He landed at Shanghai in the autumn of 1859, probably as first mate of an American sailing ship. He was without money, without influence and without prospects, but he was determined to carve a place for himself among the Chinese people. The Tai-ping Rebellion had begun in 1851 and had raged for eight years when Ward landed at Shanghai. This tremendous upheaval which was to continue six more years, and to cost the lives of twenty millions of Chinese, was threatening Shanghai and repeated attempts had been made to invest and capture this great port of foreign commerce and shipping.

The Imperial Government had been unable to make effective headway against the vast hordes of rebels who had flocked to the standards of the Rebel leader, who called himself the "Heavenly King of the Great Dynasty of the Heavenly Kingdom." By 1860 the Tai-pings had swept across the populous and fertile regions of two of the three watercourses of China and their chief end now was to regain the mastery of the Yang-tsze Kiang. The destruction of property and population within the three months since their sally from the captured metropolis of Nanking, revived the stories told of the devastation caused by Attilla and Tamerlane. In August of this year Shanghai was threatened by a force of somewhat less than twenty thousand rebels and would have been captured if it had not been protected by British and French troops landed to protect the foreign interests of the port.

Ward was twenty-seven years old at this time and found his first employment as an officer on one of the river steamers which plied up and down the Yang-tsze. He showed his mettle while engaged in this traffic, for a merchant of Shanghai who took passage on Ward's steamer, relates that she grounded and was in danger of capture by Chinese pirates. The captain believed that destruction was so certain that he

talked of suicide. Ward took his place, put heart into the crew, stood the pirates off and got the steamer afloat.

Meanwhile the foreign merchants and bankers of Shanghai were working hand in hand with the natives to strengthen the defense of the city. Large amounts of money were raised to equip gunboats and artillery and a foreign contingent was drilling as a volunteer infantry force. Ward obtained a commission as first officer of the American-built gunboat *Confucius*, which was one of a flotilla organized to fight the rebels on the water. His commander, Captain Gough, made young Ward acquainted with an influential Chinese banker, Taki, who cooperated in behalf of the Chinese Imperial Government with the foreign residents of Shanghai who were furnishing arms and gunboats and money to attack the rebels. Ward made a brilliant record as a fighting officer in this gunboat service and won the admiration and confidence of this Taki, who was the confidential adviser of Li Hung Chang, then fast coming into prominence as the strong man of the demoralized Manchu Government at Peking.

Douglas, the British biographer of Li Hung Chang, has placed it to the credit of the great Viceroy that he should have been astute enough to recognize the ability of this young American wanderer who appeared upon the scene from nowhere in particular. This writer states that Ward was given employment as a military officer by the Association of Patriotic Merchants of Shanghai "at Li's instigation." It is certain that Ward did not let the grass grow under his feet. The Imperialists were in desperate straits and were seeking foreign aid. Wasting no words, Ward submitted a proposition to the Government through Taki, that he would, for a large cash price, undertake the capture of Sung Kiang, the capital city of the Shanghai district, and a great rebel stronghold, a few miles up the Yangtzse. Once in possession of Sung Kiang he would make it his

headquarters for operations by land and water, as a diversion to draw the Tai-pings away from Shanghai.

This audacious proposition was accepted and funds were granted to make a beginning. A company of one hundred foreigners was enlisted by Ward, his recruits being picked from among the deserters and discharged seamen and other desperate riffraff of the naval and merchant fleets. With this handful of men hammered into some kind of discipline and well armed, Ward led the way to the walls of Sung Kiang beyond which the rebels were mustered in thousands. A desperate assault was made, but Ward had no artillery and could not batter a breach in the great walls. His men tried to take the place by a straight assault, but were beaten back, the motley legion badly cut up, and compelled to straggle back to Shanghai.

Ward paid off and discharged this company and recruited his next force largely from among the native sailors of Manila who were always to be found in Shanghai. With only two white officers and less than one hundred men the American adventurer made a second attack on the rebel stronghold and surprising the garrison at night managed to open one of the gates and charge into the city. The Tai-pings were unable to withstand the headlong assault of this small column and surrendered the place, which was looted and the plunder given to the men who had captured it.

Ward had carried out his contract and the Chinese Imperial Treasurer paid him his price. He had established a base and a fortress to hold and there were funds in his war chest. His success attracted many capable foreign fighting men and his force grew until General Frederick Townsend Ward was able to organize a formidable body of drilled soldiers to which the name of Chang-Shing Kiun, or "Ever Victorious Force," was given by the Chinese. Its composition was heterogeneous, but the energy, tact and discipline of the leader soon molded it into

something like a martial corps, able to serve as a nucleus for training a native army.

"Foreigners generally looked down upon the undertaking and many of the allied naval and military officers regarded it with doubt and dislike. It had to prove its character by works, but the successive defeats of the insurgents during the year 1862 at Kiangsu and Chehkiang clearly demonstrated the might of those drilled men over ten times their number of undisciplined braves.

"Soon after his first success General Ward decided to move against Tsing-pu, a Rebel stronghold thirty miles from his base. The flower of his fighting force for this expedition consisted of five drill-masters and twenty-five deserters, mostly English, whom he had secretly enlisted at Shanghai. Added to these was his small command of Manila-men, now two hundred in number and a body of five thousand Chinese from the highly paid, picked troops of the foremost Chinese general, Li Ai Tang, a corps distinguished by the title of "Imperial Braves." *

In September of 1861 Ward launched this force against Tsing-pu, which was garrisoned by two thousand rebels, who were commanded by a brilliant English officer named Savage. The defense conducted by this opposing soldier of fortune was so successful that Ward's little army was crumpled up by volleys of musketry poured from the walls and totally defeated in an engagement which lasted not more than a quarter of an hour. Half of the attacking force was killed or wounded and Ward himself was five times hit by bullets. While he was under the surgeon's care in Shanghai he gave it out that his force had been disbanded because the foreign allies set up the claim that he had been guilty of a breach of neutrality. His enlistments and drills went on in secret, however, and his chief supporter, Taki, put him in possession of several batteries of artillery.

* The Middle Kingdom, by S. Wells Williams.

When Ward was allowed to leave the hospital he mustered all the men he could find of his old corps and made ready to take the field. Again he sallied out against Tsing-pu, but the second attack was even more disastrous than the first. He lost his guns and his gunboats and many of his men and returned to his headquarters at Sung Kiang beaten and discredited. Taki, representing the Imperial Government, had lost confidence in Ward as a soldier, but Li Hung Chang still had faith in him and was ready to support him in further movements.

Ward's funds were at a low ebb at this time, for Admiral Sir James Hope, of the British Navy, put him under arrest and held him a close prisoner on the flagship *Chesapeake*. The Admiral made an effort to bring Ward to trial on the charge of recruiting deserters from the British Navy, but the American soldier proved that he was a naturalized subject of China and the Admiral had no other resource than to keep this troublesome interloper a prisoner on board the flagship. He made his escape by jumping overboard and swimming ashore. After a series of thrilling adventures he once more returned to the task of recruiting British deserters for his garrison at Sung Kiang.

The jealousy and animosities of the British and other foreign naval men soon led Ward to change his tactics and he bent his efforts to recruit a native force to be commanded by European officers and drilled in the European school of arms. Neither the Imperial Government of China, nor its European allies could take exceptions to these methods and Sung Kiang became a military school for the training of the first modern Chinese Army.

"On a personal inspection of the Camp of Instruction at Sung Kiang to which he had been invited, Sir James Hope was well received by the troops and reported favorably. He saw, for the first time in his life, a large force of native Chinamen paraded in European uniforms and showing themselves expert

in European drill. In view of such results and of the possibilities which they disclosed, he found it best to wink at the harboring of a few deserters from his fleet, and Ward was promised every facility in his new attempt.

"In the opening months of 1862 the time had come when the Allies were ready to throw off the mask of nominal neutrality, and to take open ground against the Rebellion. Humanity and civilization itself seemed to demand it. The Tai-ping movement was a little past its zenith, but still most disastrous to commerce and to the general interests of China as most foreigners saw them. The compact between the Imperialists and the Rebels had provided that the latter should not come within thirty miles of Shanghai and that the Allies should not interfere within that radius. It was limited to a year and the limit had expired. Ward at this time commanded a force of ten thousand men. He seems at last to have come to terms of perfect understanding with the authorities, both native and foreign.

"On February 21, 1862, General Ward took the offensive with a thousand men, supported by Admiral Hope and the French Admiral Protet, in a movement to enforce the observances of the thirty-mile limit. This movement involved many encounters and was a brilliant success. From it Ward won great credit for his courage and strategic sense, together with the high appreciation of both his naval supporters. Of the six thousand Rebels who were expected to make of the fortified town they were defending an impregnable fortress, a large part were captured and turned over to the mercies of the Shanghai Imperialists, who proceeded to decapitate them, with every circumstance of barbarity, in the public square of the city. Ward succeeded in arresting the slaughter as soon as it was brought to his knowledge.

"This victory was hailed with great enthusiasm, and earned for Ward's corps the compliments of an Imperial decree. Its

numbers were doubled, and Admiral Hope found it in his great heart to forgive his quondam prisoner and to praise him warmly. In March, 1862, a memorial to the British Consul-General from representative citizens of Shanghai, shows that progress was making, though slowly, for the relief of the port.

"At this time Ward discovered that the Rebel leaders were contracting for gunboats in the United States. On learning from him this fact, Li Hung Chang made an effective protest to the American Minister, and applauded the loyalty which prompted Ward's information and which defeated the Rebel plan. But gunboats and implements of war were a necessity to both parties and Ward, through his brother who had joined him in China, and through his father, now a ship broker in New York, was in a position to supply the Imperialists with muskets, artillery and river steamers, and this he did.

"On April 26th, an attack was planned on a strong walled town twenty miles from Shanghai. A half-dozen armed steamers and transports furnished by the Allies, together with thirty little Chinese gunboats, moved up the river in support of Ward's force, which consisted of three battalions with howitzers, and of a body of three thousand Chinese troops. The city fell and was looted, mainly, it was charged, by French sailors.

"On May 6th, the English and French Admirals took their turn at the work and the French Admiral Protet, universally esteemed, was killed. A bronze statue commemorates the distinguished Frenchman at Shanghai, and Imperial honors were accorded him in an edict commanding gifts "to comfort the departed soul of the faithful," and sacrifices to be arranged by Li Hung Chang, "to the *manes* of the French Admiral." A detachment of the "Ever Conquering Legion" was present at the military mass celebrated in his honor at the Cathedral of Shanghai.

"On May 13th, Ward made his fourth attempt to capture

Tsing-pu and this time with complete success. No looting was permitted. Ward received in hand the stipulated thirty thousand taels as the price of this important capture, returning at the head of his victorious troops to the Sung Kiang headquarters. He had now equipped his men with arms bought from the English Army in India and with Prussian rifles. He had been supported in this attack by English and French troops and by a French gunboat carrying a heavy rifled gun which, after a three hours' bombardment, effected a breach and let in his force. But his men were later dislodged by an overwhelming Rebel horde, after a most creditable defense.

"General Ward and his troops earned great distinction in an action on May 19th. Ward's ambition at this time seems to have been to lead a corps of twenty-five thousand men of all arms, and to be empowered by the Emperor to operate with a free hand, independently of English and French Allies, and to be responsible directly to him. The London *Times*, in a notice of his death, intimates that he had achieved this object.

"At last, in August, 1862, he started out without support for a fifth attack upon the stronghold of Tsing-pu. A reward was offered for the first man to enter the city and a Manila-man, Macanaya, General Ward's devoted aid-de-camp, secured it. The 'Legion' succeeded at last in taking and holding the town. Probably this was the action so feelingly described by the one great captain among all the hosts enlisted under the Rebel flag. He complains that Li Hung Chang was employing "devil soldiers" against him, and found it necessary to march in person against these "Foreign Devils" at the head of ten thousand picked men. "Imagine it," he says, "a thousand devils keeping in check my ten thousand men! Who could put up with such a thing!"

"Ward's relations with Taki were at this time most cordial, and they were now joint owners of two American-built gunboats.

With other gunboats chartered by them, the banker and General Ward—he was now a Chinese Admiral as well—fitted out an expedition against the river pirates. Bombarding failed to dislodge them from their stockades, but Ward disembarked a force and they fled before him.

"Ward's success in disciplining the Chinese was beginning to stimulate the Allies. The French in turn raised a native legion and put a French officer at the head of it, and when an expedition was organized against a force of Rebels threatening Ning Po, with the support of Captain Rhoderick Dhu commanding the *Encounter* whose draught of water forbade a near approach, a French lieutenant leading a corps of the new Franco-Chinese contingent was taken into action on board the river boat *Confucius*, while Ward's men, in equal numbers, were towed in launches up the river by the British gunboat *Hardy*. At the end of a six hours' struggle Ward fell back with the loss of eight officers and a hundred and fifty men. Next day the attack was renewed with success and the Rebels fled to Tsz Ki."

The story now approaches the closing scene of Ward's career. He was now ordered to Ning Po to take command. The order reached him at dusk. Late as the hour was, he at once paraded his troops, reviewed them, and expressed the highest satisfaction with accouterments and drill. He was never to marshal them again. More devoted following no captain ever had. It was their pride to be known as "Ward's disciplined Chinese." He reached Ning Po with only the life-guard of Manila-men who were always near him, and at once made his dispositions for driving the Rebels out of Tsz Ki.

On the morning of September 20th he took five or six hundred men up the river and opened an attack on the fort at Tsz Ki with howitzers. A storming party passed him on its approach to the wall it was to scale, and he said to Captain Cook who led it: "You must do it with a rush, or we shall fail, for they

are very numerous." He was shot and carried to the rear before the scaling ladders could be placed. His command was largely made up of troops which were strangers to him, and it has been hinted that he may have been shot by his own men. The assault prevailed. Tsz Ki fell, and the Legion held the town.

Ward's comrade in arms, Forrester, has thus described the closing scene:

"'We now turned our attention to Tsz Ki. Ward being anxious to capture the city with the least possible delay, we started out together to reconnoitre the field. We had become so accustomed to the enemy's fire that we had grown somewhat careless. While we were standing together inspecting the position Ward put his hand suddenly to his side and exclaimed: 'I have been hit.' A brief investigation showed that the wound was a serious one, and I had him carried on board the *Hardy* where surgical attendance was promptly given. I then held a consultation with the officers of the expedition. It was decided to carry out Ward's plan and attack the city at once. Ladders were quickly thrown across the moat which were then drawn over and placed against the walls, and, before the garrison fully recognized what we were about, our troops were in possession of the city.

"'As soon as I had my troops properly housed and posted, I set out with General Ward for Ning Po. Arrived there, the General was removed to the house of Doctor Parker, a resident physician, and every precaution taken. But he had been gradually sinking, and he died that night.

"'Early the next morning I ordered his body conveyed on board the *Confucius*, that we might reach Shanghai at the earliest possible moment. The captain of the boat (Lynch by name, afterwards with Semmes in the *Alabama*) proved insubordinate. At nine o'clock we were ten miles out at sea and short of coal. I had the captain put in irons and turned over

the command to the lieutenant. We were then in such a strong current that I gave up hope of getting the steamer back to Ning Po, determined rather to work our way to a port near Shanghai. By the middle of the afternoon we ran alongside a British ship flying Dent and Company's flag. I knew this firm to be warm supporters of the Imperial Government, and so had no hesitance in boarding the vessel and obtaining a supply of coal. The funeral of General Ward at Shanghai was a most impressive one. A great number of civil and military officers accompanied his body to Sung Kiang, where it was interred with great pomp, and enjoyed the extraordinary honor of a resting place in the Confucian Temple."

Captain Rhoderick Dhu, of the flagship *Encounter*, in transmitting Lieutenant Bogle's report of Ward's death to Sir James Hope, wrote: "It is now my painful duty to inform you that General Ward, while directing the assault, fell, mortally wounded. The *Hardy* brought him down the same evening to Ning Po, and he died the next morning in Doctor Parker's house. During a short acquaintance with General Ward I have learned to appreciate him much, and I fear his death will cast a gloom over the Imperial cause in China, of which he was the stay and prop."

How cordially Sir James responded to these generous sentiments from a gallant British sailor appears from his dispatch to Minister Burlingame, transmitting the announcement of Ward's death, which the American Minister embodied in his dispatch to Washington:

"I am sure you will be much grieved to hear of poor Ward's death. The Chinese Government have lost a very able and gallant servant, who has rendered them much faithful service, and whom it will not be easy for them to replace."

Of the events immediately following the death of Frederick Townsend Ward and the appointment of Colonel Peter Gordon

("Chinese" Gordon) to the command of the "Ever Victorious "Legion," Dr. S. Wells Williams in his monumental work, The Middle Kingdom, writes as follows:

"The death of General Ward deprived the Imperialists of an able leader. The career of this man had been a strange one, but his success in training his men was endorsed by honorable dealings with the mandarins who had reported well of him at Peking. He was buried at Sung Kiang, where a shrine was erected to his memory and incense is burned before him to this day."

# CHAPTER XXI

## THE EBBING OF THE TIDE

WHEN the Embargo of 1807 was proclaimed as a counter-blow to England's "unofficial war on American commerce and her wholesale impressment of American seamen," the house-flags of Salem merchants flew over one hundred and fifty-two vessels engaged in foreign trade. The Embargo fell with blighting effects upon this imposing fleet and the allied activities interwoven throughout the life and business of the town, and the square-riggers lay empty and idle at the wharves. In 1808 the foreign commerce of the United States decreased from $246,000,000 to $79,000,000, and a British visitor, writing of New York, described what might have been seen in Salem:

"The port indeed was full of ships, but they were dismantled and laid up; their decks were cleared, their hatches fastened down, and scarcely a sailor was to be found on board. Not a box, bale, cask, barrel, or package was to be seen upon the wharves. Many of the counting houses were shut up or advertised to be let, and the few solitary merchants, clerks and porters, and laborers that were to be seen, were walking about with their hands in their pockets. The coffee houses were almost empty; the streets near the waterside were almost deserted; the grass had begun to grow upon the wharves."

The Embargo was removed in the spring of 1809 and Yankee ships hastened to spread their white wings on every sea. Salem merchants loaded their vessels with merchandise and dispatched

The Salem Custom House, built in 1818

them to skim the cream of the European market. It was out of the frying-pan into the fire, however, for Napoleon had set a wicked trap for these argosies and so ordered it that all American shipping found in the ports of France, Spain, Italy, Denmark, Prussia and Norway was confiscated and plundered under flimsy pretext of violations of paper blockades, and what not, of which these unsuspecting American shipmasters were wholly unaware. Thiers states that Napoleon wrote to the Prussian Government:

"Let the American ships enter your ports. Sieze them afterwards. You shall deliver the cargoes to me, and I will take them in part payment of the Prussian war debt."

John Quincy Adams declared that fifty American vessels were thus taken in Norway and Denmark. In 1809–10, fifty-one of our ships were seized in the ports of France, forty-four in the ports of Spain, twenty-eight in Naples, and eleven in Holland, with a total loss to helpless American owners of at least ten million dollars. Felt's Annals of Salem states that "on the 19th of August (1809), the ship *Francis*, Capt. William Haskell, arrives. She was purchased of the Neapolitan government by our consul there, to bring home the crews of American vessels confiscated by their order. Two hundred and fourteen persons came in her, many of whom belonged to this town. Their treatment is said to have been very cruel. The amount of Salem vessels and their cargoes condemned at Naples was 783,000 dollars."

The stout-hearted merchants of Salem rallied bravely and when the War of 1812 began, they owned one hundred and twenty-six ships, fifty-eight of them East Indiamen. The war played havoc with this fleet, notwithstanding the activity of Salem privateers, and in 1815, there were left only fifty-seven of these ships in foreign commerce, a loss of a hundred sail in seven years. The tide had begun to ebb, the golden age was waning,

and yet in 1816 the Salem Custom House cleared forty-two square-riggers for the East Indies and other ports of the Orient. But the pioneering, path-finding era was almost over, except for ventures to the South Seas, Madagascar, and some of the ports of Africa and South America. The trade with the Orient in which Salem ships had blazed the way was now shared with the ships of other American ports.

The richest decade in this picturesque and adventurous traffic with the coasts and islands of strange, far-distant climes had been from 1800 to 1810, during which the duties paid on foreign cargoes amounted to $7,272,633, and the entries numbered 1,758, or an average of almost three ships a day signalling their home-coming from beyond seas.

During the years from 1820 to 1840 Salem continued to hold fast to her foreign trade, although overshadowed by Boston, and the old warehouses on the wharves were filled with the products of Zanzibar, Sumatra, Calcutta, Manila, Leghorn, the Rio Grande, Cayenne, Siam, Ceylon, and the Gold Coast. In 1850 the beginning of the end was in sight, and the "foreign entries" from Nova Scotia far outnumbered those from all the other ports in which the natives had once believed the map of America to consist chiefly of a vast commercial metropolis called Salem. The end of the history of the port, except for coastwise trade may be read in the Custom House records, as follows:

"In 1860 the foreign entries were: from Nova Scotia 215, Java, 7, Africa 25, Cayenne 10, Montevideo 2, Zanzibar 4, Surinam 2, Rio Grande 2, Buenos Ayres 2, and one each from Mozambique, Shields, Sunderland, Port Praya, Newcastle and Trapani.

"In 1870 the foreign entries were: from the British provinces 117, Cayenne, 3, Newcastle 2, and one each from Zanzibar, Rio Grande, Cape Verde Islands, and Sunderland.

"In 1878 the foreign entries were: from the British Provinces 53, and none from any other ports."

Although in these latter days the romances of shipping had somewhat departed, yet now and then a Salem square-rigger brought home a tale to remind the old salts of the thrilling days of yore. There was the *Sumatra*, for example, Captain Peter Silver, which came from Batavia in 1842. While at sea she fell in with a bark which flew signals of distress yet appeared to be in good order below and aloft. There was no crew on deck, however, no living soul to be seen except a woman who implored help with frantic gestures. Running down close, Captain Silver made out the vessel to be the *Kilmars* of Glasgow, and he sent a boat aboard to pick off the lone woman. She proved to be a girl, only eighteen years old, wife of the master of the bark, almost out of her wits with hysteria and exhaustion. She said that the *Kilmars* had sailed from Batavia two months previously with a cargo of sugar for Europe. The crew, shipped in the Dutch East Indies, were a desperate and unruly lot of beachcombers, several of them released convicts.

A few days before the *Sumatra* came in sight, the captain of the Scotch bark had discovered that his crew was planning mutiny and were about to make their attack and gain possession of the vessel after ridding themselves of the officers. This captain was a man of the right mettle, for he promptly picked out the ringleader, charged him with the conspiracy, and after a brisk encounter shot him with a pistol, and removed him from the scene for the time. The mates were suspected of disaffection and the captain succeeded in locking them in the after cabin, after which he sailed into his crew, drove all hands below and fastened the hatches over them. The decks being cleared in this most gallant fashion, the captain, with the help of two boys undertook to navigate the bark back to Batavia.

This proved to be a bigger undertaking than he could handle,

and while passing in sight of land, the captain decided to go ashore in a boat with the two boys and find help, the weather being calm and the mutineers securely bottled up below. He expected to be gone no more than a few hours, but the day passed, night came down, and his boat was missing. The young wife was alone, distraught and helpless, and she took her stand by the rail, determined to throw herself overboard if the mutineers should regain the deck. Next morning she sighted the *Sumatra* and was saved. But while the crew of the *Sumatra* was making sail to resume the voyage, no more than a few minutes after the boat had fetched the girl on board, the ruffians confined on the bark broke out from their prison, swarmed on deck, and took possession of their bark.

Captain Peter Silver of the *Sumatra* was not disposed to give them a battle, and they got the *Kilmars* under way and steered off on a course of their own. Upon reaching Batavia Captain Silver landed the young wife and gave her in charge of the Dutch officials who took care of her with sympathetic hospitality and sent her home to her kinfolk in Scotland. Sometime later the *Kilmars* entered the port of Angier where the mutineers were promptly captured and tried, and the bark was returned to her owners.

The captain of the *Kilmars* and the two boys were picked up adrift in the Straits of Sunda, and it was discovered that he had become insane from overwork and anxiety which explained why he had abandoned his wife and set off to find help on a strange coast. He was later restored to health and it is presumed that this plucky shipmaster, his girl wife and his bark were safely reunited after being parted from one another under these very extraordinary circumstances.

It is a coincidence worth noting that the first commanding figure in the maritime history of Salem, Philip English, was born in the Isle of Jersey, and that John Bertram, the last of

From the oil painting by Edgar Parker

Captain John Bertram

the race of great shipping merchants of the port hailed from the same island. Two centuries intervened between their careers, John Bertram living until 1882, and witnessing the passing of the foreign commerce of Salem and the coming of the age of steam upon the high seas. As a young man he saw an average of a hundred square-rigged ships a year come home to Salem from the Orient, Africa, South America, Europe and the South Sea Islands. In his latter years he saw this noble commerce dwindle and American seamen vanish until in 1870 the bark *Glide* from Zanzibar recorded the last entry in the Salem Custom House of a vessel from beyond the Cape of Good Hope, and, in 1877, the Schooner *Mattie F.* crept in from South America as the last vessel to fetch home a cargo from anywhere overseas. The Manila trade had become a memory in 1858, the farewell voyage to Sumatra was made in 1860. Until the end of the century Salem shipowners were interested in the trade with the Philippines and other distant ports, but their vessels departed from and came back to Boston.* The Salem firm of Silsbee, Pickman and Allen built a fleet of fast and noble ships for the hemp trade, among them the *Sooloo*, *Panay* and *Mindoro*, but they never knew their own port, and in 1896 the last of this fleet, the *Mindoro*, was towed to Derby Wharf in Salem harbor to rot in idleness until she was cut down to a coal barge.

John Bertram deserved to be classed with the older generation of Elias Hasket Derby and Joseph Peabody, because he possessed the same high qualities of foresight, daring and sagacity, a type of the militant leader of commerce on the firing line of

* "July 1, 1833. Nearly half our commercial capital is employed in other ports. During the past year there sailed from Salem 14 ships, 10 of them for India, 2 on whaling voyages to the Pacific; 5 barks, 4 of which for India; 94 brigs, 14 of them for India; and 23 schooners. Fourteen ships, 6 barks, 27 brigs and 6 schooners belonging to this place sailed from other ports on foreign voyages." (Felt's Annals of Salem.)

civilization. Like theirs, his was a splendid American spirit which created, builded, and won its rewards by virtue of native ability inspired and impelled by the genius of its time and place. He was in a privateer in the War of 1812, and lived to see his country's flag almost vanish from blue water, its superb merchant marine dwindle to almost nothing, but while it was in its glory he played well his part in carrying the stars and stripes, over his own ships, wherever the mariners of other nations went to seek commerce. This John Bertram came to Salem in his boyhood and in 1813 was sailing out of Boston as a cabin boy in the schooner *Monkey*. A little later shipping out of Charleston in a privateer, he was taken prisoner and confined in British prison ships at Bermuda and Barbadoes. Having learned to speak French in his early years on the Isle of Jersey he persuaded his captors that he was a French subject and was released but was again captured and carried off to England while homeward bound to Salem. His was the usual story of lads with brains and ambition in that era, at first a sailor and shipmaster, then an owner of vessels and a merchant on shore.

John Bertram served a long apprenticeship before he forsook the quarterdeck. In 1824 he sailed for St. Helena in the chartered schooner *General Brewer*, and when a few days at sea over hauled the Salem brig *Elizabeth*, Captain Story, also headed for St. Helena. Commerce was a picturesque speculation then, and each of these skippers was eager to make port first with his cargo and snatch the market away from his rival.

The weather was calm, the wind was light, and Captain Bertram invited Captain Story to come on board and have a cup of tea, or something stronger. The skippers twain sat on deck and eyed each other while they yarned, each assuring the other that he was bound to Pernambuco. St. Helena? Nonsense! Captain Story was rowed back to his brig, the two

vessels made sail and jogged on their course. When nightfall came, however, John Bertram threw his whole deck load of lumber overboard in order to lighten his schooner and put her in her best trim for sailing, cracked on all the canvas he could carry, and let her drive for St. Helena as if the devil were after him. He beat the *Elizabeth* to port so handsomely that his cargo had been sold at fancy prices and he was standing out of the harbor, homeward bound when the brig came creeping in with a very long-faced Captain Story striding her poop.

Soon after this Captain Bertram determined to go after a share of the South American trade, and after a voyage to the Cape of Good Hope in the *Velocity*, he carried her to the Rio Grande and the Coast of Patagonia to trade in hides. He went ashore, leaving Captain W. B. Smith to pick up hides during short coastwise voyages, and finding the adventures prosperous, bought a Salem brig at Pernambuco and kept both vessels busy. For three years Captain Bertram lived on the coast of Patagonia directing the operations of his little fleet and taking this exile as a routine part of the education of an American shipping merchant.

After his return to Salem his activities were shifted to Zanzibar where the American flag was almost unknown. Madagascar had been opened to American trade in 1821 by the Salem brig *Beulah* on her way home from Mocha. Zanzibar was a small settlement with no foreign trade, gum-copal, the principal staple product, being carried to India in the Sultan's vessels. In 1826 the Salem brig *Ann* called at Zanzibar and showed the natives the first American flag they had ever seen, but no attempt was made to establish commerce with the port until John Bertram set sail in the *Black Warrior* in 1830. He scented a pioneering voyage with gum-copal as the prize, an import in great demand by makers of varnish and up to that time imported by way of India at great cost. When the *Black Warrior* arrived at Zanzi-

bar the Sultan was on the point of dispatching a vessel loaded with the coveted gum-copal to India, but this typical Salem navigator would not let such a chance slip through his fingers. He boarded the Sultan and made him an offer in shining silver dollars for the cargo, and the dazzled potentate set his slaves at work to transfer the cargo to the hold of the *Black Warrior*.

Thence John Bertram sailed home, and sold his gum-copal for a handsome profit. Other ships followed in his wake and for many years the Zanzibar trade in gum-copal was chiefly carried on in ships out of Salem which controlled the supply of this commodity as it had won and held the pepper trade with Sumatra and the coffee trade with Mocha during an earlier generation.

When the news of the California gold discoveries swept the East like wildfire in 1848, John Bertram was one of the first shipowners to grasp the possibilities of the trade around Cape Horn to San Francisco. Before the end of 1848 he had sent out a ship to carry the advance guards of the argonauts. This bark *Eliza* cleared from Derby Wharf in December with assorted cargo and passengers, and was cheered by an excited crowd which swarmed among the East India warehouses and listened to the departing gold-seekers sing in lusty chorus the "California Song" which later became the favorite ditty of many a ship's company bound round the Horn. It ran to the tune of "Oh! Susannah" and carried such sentiments as these:

"I come from Salem City
With my wash-bowl on my knee;
I'm going to California
The gold dust for to see.
It rained all day the day I left,
The weather it was dry;
The sun so hot I froze to death,
Oh, brother, don't you cry.

CHORUS

Oh, California;
That's the land for me,
I'm going to California
With my wash-bowl on my knee.*

For this roaring California trade John Bertram and his partners built a famous American clipper, the *John Bertram*, of eleven hundred tons, at East Boston. The remarkable feature of this undertaking was that the ship was launched sixty days after the laying of her keel and *ninety days* from the time the workmen first laid tools to the timbers she was sailing out of Boston harbor with a full cargo, bound to San Francisco. The *John Bertram* was a staunch, able, and splendidly built ship, notwithstanding this feat of record-breaking construction. Thirty years after her maiden voyage she was still afloat in the deep-water trade, although under a foreign flag, a fine memorial of the skill and honesty of New England shipbuilders.

After winning a handsome fortune in his shipping enterprises John Bertram had foresight and wisdom to perceive that American ships in foreign trade were doomed to make a losing fight. Their day was past. He turned his energies into other and more profitable channels, and keeping pace with the march of the times, engaged in railroad development and manufacturing enterprises, a shipping merchant of the old school who adapted himself to new conditions with a large measure of success.

* Captain John H. Eagleston took the brigantine *Mary and Ellen* out to California two months ahead of the *Eliza*, in October, 1848, loading with a general cargo to sell to the gold-seekers. While at San Francisco in June, 1849, he met the *Eliza*, and later wrote, in an account of the voyage:

"On board the *Eliza* there were quite a number of passengers. Several of these remaining in San Francisco, pitched their tent in Happy Valley where Mr. Jonathan Nichols, stored as he was with fun and song, assisted by his social and free-hearted companions, made their quarters at all times inviting and pleasant. I was often with them, and under the beautiful evening sky, the echoes of good singing pleased the squatters that composed the little beehive villages which dotted the valley, especially 'The Washbowl on my Knee,' which was the usual wind-up."

Much of his fortune he gave to benefit his town of Salem in which his extensive philanthropies keep his memory green.

In 1869, Robert S. Rantoul of Salem, while writing of the town's maritime history made this brave attempt to convince himself that her glory had not yet departed:

"While our packets ply to New York and our steam tug puffs and screams about the harbor; while marine railways are busy and shipyards launch bigger merchantmen than ever; while coal comes in upwards of four hundred colliers yearly, and our boarding officers report more than fifteen hundred arrivals, * while our fishing fleets go forth, and our whalers still cruise the waters of the Indian Ocean and the North Pacific, while we turn over $100,000 to $125,000 per year to the Federal Treasury from import duties and enter a large part of the dates, gum, spices, ivory, ebony and sheepskins brought into this country, it is no time yet to despair of this most ancient seaport of the United States of America."

This was in a way, a swan-song for the death of Salem romance. The one steam tug which "screamed about the harbor," was the forerunner of a host of her kind which should trouble the landlocked harbor that once swarmed with privateers and East Indiamen. The coal barge and the coasting schooner were henceforth to huddle in sight of crumbling Derby Wharf, and the fluttering drone of the spindles in the cotton mill to be heard along the waterfront where the decks of the stately square-riggers had echoed to the roaring chanties of "Whiskey Johnny," "Blow the Man Down," and "We're Off for the Rio Grande."

Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote an epitaph of Salem as a deep-water seaport, and thus it appeared to him, the greatest of its children, as he viewed it sixty years ago:

"In my native town of Salem, at the head of what, half a

* Coastwise schooners and vessels from the Canadian provinces.

century ago, in the days of old King Derby, was a bustling wharf, but which is now burdened with decayed wooden warehouses, and exhibits few or no symptoms of commercial life; except, perhaps, a bark or brig, half way down its melancholy length, discharging hides; or, nearer at hand, a Nova Scotia schooner pitching out her cargo of firewood—at the head, I say, of this dilapidated wharf, which the tide often overflows, and along which, at the base and in the rear of the row of buildings, the track of many languid years is seen in a border of unthrifty grass—here, with a view from its front windows adown the not very enlivening prospect, and thence across the harbor, stands a spacious edifice of brick. . . .

"The pavement round about the above-described edifice—which we may as well name at once as the Custom House of the port—has grass enough growing in its chinks to show that it has not, of late days, been worn by any multitudinous resort of business. In some months of the year, however, there often chances a forenoon when affairs move onward with a livelier tread. Such occasions might remind the elderly citizen of that period before the last war with England, when Salem was a port by itself; not scorned, as she is now, by her own merchants and ship-owners, who permit her wharves to crumble to ruin, while their ventures go to swell, needlessly and imperceptibly, the mighty flood of commerce at New York or Boston. On some such morning, when three or four vessels happen to have arrived at once—usually from Africa or South America—or to be on the verge of their departure thitherward, there is a sound of frequent feet, passing briskly up and down the granite steps. Here before his own wife has greeted him, you may greet the sea-flushed shipmaster, just in port, with his vessel's papers under his arm in a tarnished tin box. Here, too, comes his owner, cheerful or somber, gracious or in the sulks, accordingly as his scheme of the now accomplished voyage has been realized

in merchandise that will readily be turned into gold, or has buried him under a bulk of commodities such as nobody will care to rid him of. . . ."

It is unmanly to mourn over old, dead days as better than the present times, to say that men were stronger, simpler, braver in the beginning of this Republic. Every age or generation, however, hammers out in the stress of its day's work some refined metal of experience, some peculiarly significant heritage to help posterity in its struggle to perpetuate the things most worth while. It was not the rich freightage of silks, spices, ivory and tea which the ships of Salem fetched home, nor the fortunes which built the stately mansions of the elm-shaded streets, that made this race of seamen worthy of a page in the history of their country's rise to greatness. They did their duty, daringly and cheerfully, in peace and in war. They let their deeds speak for them, and they bore themselves as "gentlemen unafraid," in adversity and with manly modesty in prosperity. They believed in their country and they fought for her rights, without swashbuckling or empty words. They helped one another, and their community worked hand in hand with them, on honor, to insure the safety of their perilous ventures. The men who wove the duck, the sailmakers who fashioned it to bend to the yards, the blacksmith, the rigger, the carpenter, and the instrument-maker did honest work, all cooperating to build and fit the ship their neighbor was to command so that she might weather the hardest blow and do credit to those who made and sailed her.

Every shipmaster had as good a chance as any other to win a fortune. Independence, self-reliance, initiative and ambition were fostered. It was clean-handed competition, aggressive, but with a fair chance for all. Whether it was the *Atlantic* daring to show American colors to the East India Company in Calcutta in 1788, or the *Endeavor*, with Captain David Elwell

Ship *Soolos*, Capt. Charles H. Allen, Jr., bound for San Francisco, June 1, 1861

on her quarterdeck making the first passage of an American ship through the Straits of Magellan in 1824, or the *Margaret* at anchor in Nagasaki harbor half a century before another American vessel visited a port of Japan, these adventurers of commerce were red-blooded frontiersmen of blue water, as truly and thoroughly American in spirit and ambition as the strong men who pushed into the western wilderness to carve out new empire for their countrymen.

Judged by the standards of this age, these seamen had their faults. They saw no great wrong in taking cargoes of New England rum to poison the black tribes of Africa, and the schooner *Sally and Polly* of Salem was winging it to Senegal as early as 1789. Rum, gunpowder and tobacco outbound, hides, palm oil, gold dust and ivory homeward, were staples of a busy commerce until late into the last century. But the pioneering trade to the Orient, which was the glory of the port, was free from the stain of debasing the natives for gain.

Salem is proud of its past, but mightily interested in its present. Its population is four times as great as when it was the foremost foreign seaport of the United States and its activities have veered into manufacturing channels. But as has happened to many other New England cities of the purest American pedigree, a flood of immigration from Europe and Canada has swept into Salem to swarm in its mills and factories. Along the harbor front the fine old square mansions from which the lords of the shipping gazed down at their teeming wharves are tenanted by toilers of many alien nations. But the stately, pillared Custom House, alas, no more than a memorial of vanished greatness, stands at the head of Derby Wharf to remind the passer-by, not only of its immortal surveyor, Nathaniel Hawthorne, but also of an age of which the civic seal of Salem bears witness in its motto, "*Divitis Indiae usque ad ultimum sinum*" (To the farthest port of the rich East.)

# APPENDIX

# APPENDIX

## LISTS OF THE PRIVATE ARMED SHIPS OF SALEM IN THE REVOLUTION AND THE WAR OF 1812

The following list of the armed ships of Salem from 1776 to 1783 includes both privateers and letters-of-marque. As defined in international law "letters-of-marque" as issued by a Government are privateering commissions, but in practice a distinction was made between the two classes of ships. A privateer cruised in pursuit of the enemy's commerce and went to sea for no other purpose, while a letter-of-marque vessel carried a cargo to a destined port or ports, taking prizes if they came in her way and defending herself against the enemy as a regularly commissioner private ship of war under heavy bonds to her government to obey the rules of warfare.

*The Naval Records of the Revolution*, as compiled and published by the Library of Congress, contains a list of the letters-of-marque issued by the Government, and includes no fewer than one hundred and ninety of these commissions granted to Salem shipowners, and commanders, designating them all as "private armed ships of war." The most accurate catalogues of this kind that were compiled many years ago by local historians and shipmasters agree upon one hundred and fifty-eight as the total number of vessels of all kinds which actually engaged in privateering out of the port of Salem during the Revolution. The Government records show, however, that this reckoning falls far short of the total number of craft commissioned by means of letters-of-marque to prey upon England's commerce as private ships of war. Even these Government records are not complete, however, the names of several well-known privateers

being absent from the list, while on the other hand the name of one vessel may be recorded two, three, or four times, a new commission being granted and a new bond demanded when the ship, schooner, or brig changed commanders or owners. The bond required in all cases was in the sum of $20,000.

From the *Naval Records of the Revolution*, and from all lists made and preserved in Salem archives and from other sources the following catalogue has been compiled, as the most nearly complete record of the private armed ships of Salem during the Revolution that has been published:

| *Name* | *Class* | *Commander* | *Guns* | *Men* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Active* | brigantine | William Ross<br>Johnson Briggs | 14 | 60 |
| *Adventure* | brig | J. Gardner<br>Jonathan Tucker | 4 | 10 |
| *America* | schooner | Geo. Williams | 8 | 80 |
| *Atalanta* | brig | Cornelius Thompson | 10 | 25 |
| *American Hero* | ship | William Fairfield | 16 | 25 |
| *Astrea* | ship | John Derby | 20 | 50 |
| *Aurora* | brigantine | Geo. Williams, Jr. | 6 | 12 |
| *Aurora* | brig | —— Caldwell | 10 | 75 |
| *Black Prince* | ship | Nathaniel West | 18 | 160 |
| *Banter* | sloop | Henry White | 8 | 50 |
| *Belisaurus* | ship | | | |
| *Bloodhound* | brig | | 14 | 55 |
| *Brutus* | ship | John Leach | 18 | 100 |
| *Bunker Hill* | ship | John Turner | 20 | 110 |
| *Blackbird* | schooner | William Groves | 8 | 20 |
| *Black Snake* | sloop | William Carleton | 12 | 60 |
| *Bloom* | schooner | Silas Smith | 6 | 25 |
| *Beaver* | schooner | | 10 swivels | ... |
| *Bowdoin* | sloop | | 8 | ... |
| *Buckaneer* | ship | Jeremiah Hacker | 18 | 150 |
| *Centipede* | schooner | | 6 | ... |
| *Charming Polly* | brig | D. Bigelow | | ... |
| *Captain* | brigantine | John Donaldson | 10 | 45 |
| *Cato* | brig | Johnson Briggs<br>James Pickman<br>Jesse Fearson | 16 | 60 |

| Name | Class | Commander | Guns | Men |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Canso* | brigantine | Cornelius Thompson | 10 | 35 |
| *Censured* | brig | Ephraim Emerton | | |
| *Cutter* | schooner | Silas Smith<br>Joseph Strout | 8 | 20 |
| *Cutter* | brigantine | Geo. Ashby, Jr. | 10 | 45 |
| *Cicero* | ship | Hugh Hill | 20 | 100 |
| *Commerce* | sloop | John Baptist Millet | 10 | 25 |
| *Commerce* | brigantine | Ephraim Emerton | 6 | 12 |
| *Columbia* | schooner | J. Greeley | 12 | 30 |
| *Comet* | brigantine | Samuel Waters | 6 | 15 |
| *Comet* | schooner | Richard Eldredge | 9 | 29 |
| *Creature Terrible* | brig | Robert Richardson | 14 | 43 |
| *Cardinal* | schooner | Moses Chase | 6 | 15 |
| *Civil Usage* | brig | Greag Powers<br>Peter Martin | 14 | 45 |
| *Congress* | ship | David Ropes | 20 | 130 |
| *Cyrus* | ship | Jonathan Mason, Jr | 10 | 20 |
| *Dispatch* | ship | John Felt | 10 | 60 |
| *Dolphin* | schooner | David Ropes<br>William Gray<br>Greag Powers<br>David Felt, Jr.<br>Frank Benson | 8 | 30 |
| *Dart* | schooner | Zenas Cook | 6 | 22 |
| *Delight* | schooner | J. Temple | 4 | 40 |
| *Don Galvez* | brig | Silas Jones | 6 | 16 |
| *Disdain* | ship | William Patterson | 20 | 100 |
| *Diana* | brigantine | Robert Barker | 6 | 16 |
| *Defense* | brigantine | John Barr | 10 | 16 |
| *Eagle* | brig | John Leach | 20 | 110 |
| *Exchange* | ship | Simon Forrester<br>John Collins | 20 | 60 |
| *Experiment* | brigantine | Samuel Ingersoll | 6 | 14 |
| *Essex* | ship | John Cathcart | 20 | 150 |
| *Elizabeth* | brig | Clifford Byrne<br>Ichabod Clarke | 4 | 10 |
| *Exchange* | schooner | Henry Tibbets | 2 | 15 |
| *Franklin* | ship | Silas Deval | 18 | 25 |
| *Fame* | brig | Samuel Hobbs | 16 | 50 |
| *Freedom* | brig | Benjamin Ober | 7 | 15 |
| *Fortune* | brig | Benjamin Ives | 14 | 60 |
| *Favourite* | brigantine | William Patterson | 11 | 50 |

| *Name* | *Class* | *Commander* | *Guns* | *Men* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Fanny* | brigantine | Samuel Tucker | 4 | 12 |
| *Felicity* | brig | | 8 | 20 |
| *Flying Fish* | brigantine | John Gavett<br>Anthony Divers | | ... |
| *Fly* | schooner | Christopher Babbidge<br>William Mallory | 6 | 25 |
| *Fox* | schooner | Jeremiah Lansvay<br>Jonathan Neall | 6 | 75 |
| *Friendship* | ship | Gideon Henfield | 6 | 20 |
| *General Putnam* | schooner | S. Mascotte | 8 | 66 |
| *General Gates* | brig | —— Skinner | 8 | ... |
| *General Lincoln* | brig | John Carnes | | ... |
| *General Greene* | ship | Aaron Crowell | 16 | 90 |
| *Grand Turk* | ship | Thomas Simmons<br>Joseph Pratt | 28 | 140 |
| *Grey Hound* | schooner | Jacob Wilds<br>John Cooke | 8 | 35 |
| *Good Luck* | ship | Jonathan Neall | 8 | 20 |
| *General Galvez* | ship | Thomas Smith | 18 | 40 |
| *Griffin* | brig | Gideon Henfield | | ... |
| *Gamecock* | schooner | Richard Smith | 8 | 30 |
| *General Montgomery* | brigantine | Samuel Hobbs | 14 | 60 |
| *Harlequin* | schooner | Jonathan Tucker | 6 | 16 |
| *Hornet* | schooner | Robert Brookhouse | 10 swivels | ... |
| *Henry* | schooner | John Baptist Millet | 4 | 10 |
| *Hasket & John* | brig | Benjamin Crowninshield | | ... |
| *Hero* | brig | Silas Smith | 12 | 50 |
| *Hynde* | brig | Francis Boardman | 8 | 16 |
| *Hector* | ship | John Carnes | 18 | 150 |
| *Hector* | schooner | John Cartright | 6 | 15 |
| *Hope* | schooner | Robert Wormsted | 8 | 25 |
| *Hyder Alley* | brigantine | Francis Boardman | 8 | 16 |
| *Hind* | brigantine | Benjamin Dunham | 8 | 16 |
| *Hazard* | sloop-schooner | Nathaniel Coit Webb<br>Benjamin Knight<br>Edward Smith, Jr.<br>Hugh Helme | 8 | 25 |
| *Hound* | brig | John Adkinson | 14 | 50 |
| *Harkey* | galley | Phineas Smith | 2 | 18 |
| *Hawke* | schooner | John Barbaroux<br>Jacob Wilde | 6 | 15 |
| *Iris* | ship | Robert Rantoul | 9 | 18 |

| *Name* | *Class* | *Commander* | *Guns* | *Men* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Jack* | ship | David Ropes | 14 | 60 |
| *Junius Brutus* | ship | John Brooks | 20 | 120 |
| *Jason* | ship | Charles Hamilton | 16 | 70 |
| *Julius Caesar* | ship | Thomas Benson<br>Jonathan Haraden | 14 | 40 |
| *Junius* | ship | Nathaniel West | 10 | 25 |
| *Juno* | brig | John Felt | 12 | 16 |
| *Jackall* | schooner | Adam Wellman<br>Thomas Holmes | 8 | 45 |
| *James* | ship | John Clarke | 11 | 25 |
| *John* | ship | Jonathan Ingersoll | | ... |
| *Jupiter* | ship | William Orne | 14 | 40 |
| *Joseph* | brig | Henry Higginson | 8 | 15 |
| *Kendrick* | ship | Thomas Benson | 18 | 100 |
| *Languedock* | schooner | John Augusta Dunn<br>Reuben Yoemens<br>Jeremiah Hegerty. | 4 | 25 |
| *Lexington* | brig | David Smith, Jr. | 10 | 20 |
| *Lively* | brig | George Ashby<br>John Augusta Dunn<br>Nathaniel Brookhouse | 8 | 35 |
| *Live Oak* | sloop | Samuel Tucker | 6 | 20 |
| *Lion* | brig | Jonathan Mason<br>Benjamin Warren | 16 | 50 |
| *Lark* | schooner | N. Tilden | 10 swivels | ... |
| *Lee* | schooner | Daniel Waters | | ... |
| *Lincoln* | brig | John Carnes | | ... |
| *Louis le Grande* | ship | | 18 | 100 |
| *Lucy* | brig | S. Clay | 12 | 25 |
| *Liberty* | sloop | Eben Pierce | 6 | 25 |
| *Manete* | schooner | John Daccaretta | 6 | 10 |
| *Marquis de Lafayette* | ship | Ebenezer Reed<br>John Buffington | 10 | 100 |
| *Mermaid* | brig | Jonathan Tucker | 14 | 30 |
| *Minerva* | sloop | Nehemiah Buffington | 6 | 10 |
| *Massachusetts* | brig | John Fisk<br>Jonathan Haraden | 16 | 30 |
| *Mars* | ship | William Woodbury | 16 | 75 |
| *Monmouth* | brigantine | David Ingersoll | 6 | 20 |
| *Montgomery* | brigantine | John Carnes<br>James Barr, Jr. | 8 | 20 |
| *Morning Star* | sloop | Francis Roch | 8 | 12 |

| *Name* | *Class* | *Commander* | *Guns* | *Men* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Macaroni* | brig | | 14 | ... |
| *New Adventure* | brig | Jonathan Neall | 14 | 50 |
| *Nancy* | schooner | George Leach | 6 | 25 |
| *Neptune* | ship | William Woodbury, Jr.<br>Hugh Smith<br>Silas Smith<br>Benjamin Cole | 14 | 65 |
| *Oliver Cromwell* | ship | Nathaniel West<br>James Barr, Jr. | 16 | 100 |
| *Pallas* | ship | Gamaliel Hodges | 10 | 20 |
| *Panther* | schooner | Samuel Masury | 8 | 35 |
| *Patty* | sloop | Nathan Nichols | 4 | 16 |
| *Patty* | ship | Simon Forrester<br>John Derby<br>David Smith | 8 | 20 |
| *Penguin* | schooner | Samuel Foster | 10 | 40 |
| *Pickering* | ship | Jonathan Haraden | 16 | 50 |
| *Porus* | ship | Samuel Crowell | 22 | 100 |
| *Pilgrim* | ship | Joseph Robinson | 18 | 100 |
| *Pompey* | schooner | Silas Smith | | ... |
| *Putnam* | ship | Nathan Brown | 18 | 90 |
| *Plato* | brig | | | ... |
| *Pompey* | schooner | W. Thomas | 6 | ... |
| *Port Packet* | ship | Simon Forrester | 8 | 20 |
| *Race Horse* | schooner | Alexander Story | 8 | 25 |
| *Rainbow* | schooner | Oliver Webb | 6 | 25 |
| *Rattlesnake* | ship | Mark Clark | 20 | 85 |
| *Raven* | schooner | David Needham | 12 | 40 |
| *Recovery* | brigantine | Samuel Ingersoll<br>William Dennis | | ... |
| *Revenge* | schooner | Benjamin Knight<br>Samuel Foster | 8 | 40 |
| *Revolt* | brig | Henry Phelps | 8 | 20 |
| *Resolution* | schooner | Joseph Trask | 8 | 20 |
| *Roebuck* | ship | Gideon Henfield | 14 | 90 |
| *Romulus* | brig | Joshua Grafton<br>Joseph Waters<br>Thomas Palfrey | 14 | 25 |
| *Rover* | ship | James Barr, Jr. | 24 | 100 |
| *Rover* | schooner | Thomas Morgridge | 10 | 30 |
| *Retaliation* | brig | E. Giles | 10 | 70 |
| *Revenge* | sloop | Benjamin Dean | 10 | ... |

| *Name* | *Class* | *Commander* | *Guns* | *Men* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Ranger* | schooner | Thomas Simmons | 10 | 20 |
| *Rambler* | brig | Benjamin Lovett | 16 | 40 |
| *Rhodes* | brig | N. Buffington | 20 | 90 |
| *Resolution* | ship | Samuel West | 20 | 130 |
| *Robust* | ship | Jonathan Tucker | 12 | 25 |
| *Salem* | brig | Henry Williams<br>Edward Stanley | 12 | 30 |
| *Salem Packet* | ship | Joseph Cooke<br>John Brewer | 12 | 30 |
| *Satisfaction* | schooner | Edward Stanley | 6 | 30 |
| *Speedwell* | brigantine | John Murphy | 10 | 50 |
| *Scourge* | brigantine | —— Parker | 20 | 80 |
| *Sharke* | sloop | | 10 swivels | ... |
| *Spanish Packet* | ship | Thomas Dalling | 10 | 20 |
| *Sturdy Beggar* | brig | Daniel Hathorne<br>Edward Rowland | 8 | 60 |
| *Shaker* | brig | —— Stacey | 6 | 40 |
| *Spitfire* | schooner | William Perkins | 11 | 20 |
| *Spy* | schooner | Thomas Philips | 8 | 20 |
| *Surprize* | schooner | Nathaniel Perkins<br>Germain Langevain | 8 | 35 |
| *Surprize* | brig | Benjamin Cole | 14 | 70 |
| *Swift* | brig | Israel Johnson | 14 | 70 |
| *Scorpion* | schooner | Israel Thorndike | 16 | 60 |
| *Swett* | schooner | Joseph Fearson | 12 | ... |
| *Spring Bird* | schooner | John Patten | 4 | 25 |
| *Saucy Jack* | schooner | | | ... |
| *Tartar* | schooner | Thomas Dexter | 10 | 18 |
| *Thomas* | ship | Francis Boardman | 10 | 20 |
| *Thrasher* | schooner | Benjamin Cole | 8 | 30 |
| *Titus* | sloop | John Buchmore | 4 | 11 |
| *Two Brothers* | ship | William Gray<br>Daniel Sanders | | 25 |
| *Tyger* | brig | Samuel Crowell | 14 | 70 |
| *Thorn* | ship | Samuel Tucker | | ... |
| *Trenton* | ship | Joseph Nati | 12 | ... |
| *True American* | schooner | Israel Thorndike | 6 | 50 |
| *Union* | schooner | John Blackler<br>Jonathan Gardner, 3d<br>Isaac Smith | 8 | 25 |
| *Union* | sloop | John Fearson | 6 | 30 |
| *Venus* | ship | Thomas Nicholson | 10 | 20 |

| Name | Class | Commander | Guns | Men |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Viper* | ship | Jonathan Neal<br>Benjamin Hilton | 14 | 65 |
| *Washington* | brig | Edmond Lewis | 7 | 13 |
| *Willing Maid* | schooner | John Savage | 4 | 25 |
| *Wild Cat* | brig | Daniel Ropes | 14 | 75 |
| *Warren* | schooner | I. Thorndike | 6 | 50 |
| *William* | schooner | Joseph Fearson | 8 | 25 |

## PRIVATE ARMED SHIPS OF SALEM IN THE WAR OF 1812

| Name | Class | Commander | Guns | Men |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Active* | schooner | Benjamin Patterson | 12 | 25 |
| *Alexander* | ship | T. Williams, Jr. | 18 | 140 |
| *Alfred* | ship | Benjamin Crowninshield | 16 | 110 |
| *America* | ship | Joseph Ropes<br>John Kehoe | 20 | 150 |
| | | Jas. W. Chever | | |
| *Black Vomit* | boat | John Upton | muskets | 16 |
| *Buckskin* | schooner | I. Bray | 5 | 50 |
| *Cadet* | schooner | William Calley | 2 | 40 |
| *Castigator* | launch | Stephen G. Clarke<br>Spencer Hall | 6 | 20 |
| *Cossack* | schooner | John Upton<br>Wm. Davis | 1 | 45 |
| | | Abner Poland | | |
| *Dart* | schooner | T. Symonds<br>John Green | 2 | 40 |
| *Diomede* | schooner | Jacob Crowninshield | 3 | 100 |
| *Dolphin* | schooner | Jacob Endicott | 1 | 70 |
| *Enterprize* | schooner | John R. Morgan | 4 | 100 |
| *Fair Trader* | schooner | John R. Morgan | 1 | 35 |
| *Fame* | schooner | Abner Poland<br>John Upton | 2 | 30 |
| | | —— Webb | | |
| *Frolic* | schooner | Nathan Green | 1 | 60 |
| *Galliniper* | schooner | J. B. H. Ordione<br>Timothy Wellman | 1 | 30 |
| | | Andrew Tucker | | |
| *General Putnam* | schooner | John Evans | 2 | 60 |
| *General Stark* | schooner | John Evans | 3 | 50 |
| *Grand Turk* | brig | Holten J. Breed<br>Nathan Green | 18 | 150 |

| *Name* | *Class* | *Commander* | *Guns* | *Men* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Growler* | schooner | Samuel B. Graves | | 105 |
| *Helen* | schooner | Nathaniel Lindsay<br>John Upton | 4 | 70 |
| *Halkar* | boat | John Kehoe<br>Samuel Lamson | muskets | 16 |
| *Jefferson* | sloop | S. Giles Downie<br>T. Wellman, Jr. | 1 | 20 |
| *John* | ship | James Fairfield<br>Benjamin Crowninshield | | ... |
| *John & George* | schooner | John Sinclair, Jr. | 1 | 50 |
| *Lizard* | schooner | Samuel Loring | 2 | 30 |
| *Montgomery* | brig | Holten J. Breed<br>Ben. Upton | 10 | 100 |
| *Onion* | boat | John Upton<br>Jonathan Blythe | muskets | 20 |
| *Owl* | boat | William Duncan | muskets | 14 |
| *Phoenix* | schooner | Stephenson Richards | 1 | 25 |
| *Polly* | sloop | Samuel C. Hardy | 1 | 60 |
| *Recovery* | schooner | Joseph Peele | 2 | 20 |
| *Regulator* | schooner | James Mansfield | | 50 |
| *Revenge* | schooner | John Sinclair, Jr. | 1 | 50 |
| *Scorpion* | sloop | Stephenson Richards | 1 | 20 |
| *Swift* | schooner | Harney Choate | 1 | 25 |
| *Swiftsure* | launch | Stephen Clarke<br>Charles Berry. | 1 | 20 |
| *Terrible* | boat | John Green | muskets | 10 |
| *Viper* | schooner | Joseph Preston | 1 | 20 |
| *Wasp* | sloop | Ernest A. Erwin | 2 | 35 |

## RECAPITULATION

### REVOLUTIONARY WAR

| | |
|---|---|
| Ships | 56 |
| Brigs and Brigantines | 69 |
| Sloops | 14 |
| Schooners | 56 |
| Galley | 1 |
| | 196 |
| Total number of guns | 1,965 |
| Total number of men | 7,631 |
| Total number of vessels | 196 |

### WAR OF 1812

| | |
|---|---|
| Ships | 4 |
| Brigs and Brigantines | 2 |
| Sloops | 4 |
| Schooners | 21 |
| | 31 |
| Total number of guns | 147 |
| Total number of men | 2,081 |
| Total number of vessels | 31 |

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